



CORNELL
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY



THIS BOOK IS ONE OF A
COLLECTION MADE BY
BENNO LOEWY
1854-1919
AND BEQUEATHED TO
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Cornell University Library
PS 1252.C65A19

Dramas.



3 1924 021 985 613

010



Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

D R A M A S .

General Beekes

BY

CHARLES JAMES CANNON.

AUTHOR OF "THE POET'S QUEST," "THE CROWNING HOUR," "POEMS
DRAMATIC AND MISCELLANEOUS," ETC.

NEW YORK:
E. DUNIGAN AND BROTHER,
(JAMES B. KIRKER,)
371 BROADWAY.

1857.

M E

PS

1252

C65

A19

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857,
BY CHARLES JAMES CANNON,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
Southern District of New York.

P R E L U D E .

THE busy, bustling day
At length is at a close ;
And night has come, and with the night
Come silence and repose.
And O how welcome they
To one aweary grown,
Of racking sounds, and wasting toil,
And sorrow's heavy moan.

But welcome most to him
Who has in check all day
The spirit held, whose quivering wings
Are stretched to soar away,
Above this crowded earth,
Its ceaseless moil and care,
Up to the blest empyrean,
To breathe in native air.

Or him in sweet idlesse,
Who, by the cheerful hearth,
Lives o'er his youth—its fantasies,
Its sadness, and its mirth ;

Or of the wayside flowers,
 He gathered as along
Life's thoroughfare he passed, entwines
 His simple wreath of song.

Or with the dull and coarse
 Warp of the Real weaves,
A many-coloured woof, where blend
 All tints of morn, and eve's
Rich purple and red gold,
 And Heaven's own azure hue,
With pictured tales of gallant men,
 And maidens fair and true.

Or from th' unpeopled void,
 With poet-power, creates
Things palpable, with human forms,
 And human loves and hates.
And in their joys and griefs,
 Their perils, hopes, and fears,
He gives them human sympathy,
 In human smiles and tears.

And then he fondly dreams
 These creatures of the mind,
Wherever known, from every heart
 Must ready welcome find.
And so, as well attired
 As his poor means afford,
He bids them—with "God speed!"—go forth,
 And seek the world's award.

Perchance it may be FAME,—
 And joy his bosom thrills!
 Or praise, doled like a grudgèd alms,
 The glow of hope that chills;
 Or reprobation stern:
 Or—what to him would be
 Even worse—neglect; or cold contempt,
 Scaree veiled by courtesy.

Neglect, and cold contempt;—
 Praise doubtful, and harsh blame;—
 For each a thousand chances, while
 There is scaree one for fame!
 But nought to risk is nought
 To win; and if remain
 A single prize in Fortune's wheel,
 That prize may he not gain?

Poor simple wight! dream on.
 Ere long that teacher stern,
 Old Time, shall thee a lesson read
 Thou wilt be sad to learn.
 For then the power to dream
 Will be forever gone.
 So, while thou mayst, at hush of eve,
 With hopeful heart dream on.

The Sculptor's Daughter :

A Play.

CHARACTERS.



LUIGI PERELLI, *a Sculptor.*

ORAZIO FONTANA, *a Gentleman of Rome.*

FELICE TRAPPANI, *his Friend.*

OTTAVIO ORSINI, *a young Nobleman.*

PELLEGRINO, *a Citizen.*

GIOTTO, *a Youth.*

UGO MALDONADO, *a Robber Chief.*

GIAN-ANGELO, *his Brother.*

GIACOMO, }
GUISEPPE, } *Robbers.*

ENRICOA, *the Sculptor's Daughter.*

CAMILLA, *her Aunt.*

WEDDING GUESTS, CITIZENS, AND ROBBERS.

SCENE.—*Partly in Rome; partly in the Campagna, and partly in the Abruzzi.* TIME.—*First year of the Pontificate of SIXTUS V.*

THE
SCULPTOR'S DAUGHTER.

A C T I.

SCENE I.

The Studio of PERELLI. PERELLI, and OTTAVIO disguised as an Artist.

PERELLI.

'Tis kind of thee, young sir, to give such praise
To the attempts of one whom Fortune's spite
Has doomed to drudge away a life for bread.
Had I been blest with early competence,
I might have done what in an after age
Should make my name remembered. As it is,—
But let that pass! I shall not sleep less soundly
In the poor grave, to which I now am hastening,
Than if St. Peter's were my mausoleum.
Thank Heaven for that!

OTTAVIO.

Nay, thou dost underrate
Thy worth. Among the artists who now throng
Our queenly city, there are few whose names
Stand higher than thine own. But yester eve,
The Cardinal Orsini—no mean judge—
Spake of a Dian of thy workmanship,
In terms of highest praise.

PERELLI.

Did he indeed ?
That Dian, though the last work of my hand,
Was the mind's first creation ; the one idol
That in the inmost chamber of my heart
I had set up for worship. Years and years
The form that in the marble lives at last
Did haunt me like a real presence. Scarce
An hour—a moment was it absent from me.
Yet, though I made a hundred and a hundred
Attempts in youth, when mind and body both
Were in their vigour, not till mine old age
Did the ideal stand revealed in stone.
And so his Eminence spake well of it ?

OTTAVIO.

Spake well ? He spake in raptures !

[*After a pause.*]

Yet, my friend,
Though good as made thou may'st thy fortune count
In that, thou in thy keeping hast a treasure,
To which the master-pieces of the world
Were poor !

PERELLI.

I fear I do not understand thee.
I am an artist, with the vanity,
I do not doubt, imputed to my class,
Yet ne'er have thought my most successful effort
Has even approached—I speak it in all candour—
The works of those I reverence as masters.

OTTAVIO.

Let me be plain. Thou hast a child—a daughter—
Whose living beauties not Praxiteles
Could to the cold insensate stone transfer.
She is the priceless treasure that I spake of.

PERELLI.

The child is fair enough to look upon ;
And good as she is fair. 'Tis wearing late ;
I would not seem discourteous, but the hour
Of rest is now at hand, and so I bid thee
Kindly, good-night.

OTTAVIO.

Let me a little farther

Trespass upon thee. With a suit I came,
And yet how to prefer it hardly know.
I am not what I seem ; but rich and noble ;
And, with a love to which there's no compare,
Do love thy daughter.

PERELLI.

For thy sake, fair sir,
I'm sorry for it. I, thou seest, am old,
Yet have I not outlived all memory
Of youth, nor of the flame in the young heart
By passion kindled ; and I know the pang
I must inflict, if thou dost truly love,
By saying, she thou lov'st can ne'er be thine.

OTTAVIO.

And wherefore not ?

PERELLI.

She is a maid betrothed.

OTTAVIO.

O yes, betrothed to some dull citizen,
Some needy artist or unpensioned rhymer,
Who for five hundred scudi would resign
His right to all the charms that formed a Venus.
Let him then yield his claim to her fair hand,
And I those hundreds will increase to thousands.

PERELLI.

Dost know to whom thou speak'st?

OTTAVIO.

To one whose years
Have taught him wisdom. Who will not forego
A present good for promise of the future.
Who knows—for he has felt—how weighty is
The difference between true, solid gold,
And that mere thistle-down which men call Friendship.
The youth who has thy daughter's plighted troth
Has found thy influence of more avail
Than his deservings. Let that influence now
Be used to back my suit, and I will give,
Not gratitude alone, but that will gild
The evening of a long and cheerless life
With more than sunset splendour.

PERELLI.

'Tis most plain
Thou dost not know the man to whom thou speak'st.
My life, 'tis true, has scarce been prosperous—
If man's prosperity is to be counted
By the rich coins his secret coffers hold—
Yet has not been all cheerless. In my home,
Where love has ever nestled, I have found
Amends for that which from the world I suffered.

For though the chosen of my youth was early
 Called hence to Heaven, to dwell among her kindred,
 Her gentle spirit doth my hearth still bless
 In the dear child in whom I see revived
 Bianca's loveliness of mind and feature.
 Nor am I now to fear less comfort there,
 Although the fealty was erst all mine
 Is by another shared. But this young man,
 Though him I would from all the world have chosen
 To be the prop of my declining years,
 Is not alone my choice; for since Enrica
 Did know herself possessor of a heart,
 Has he been master of it. Then, howe'er
 I may be flattered by a noble's offer,
 To lift the daughter of a nameless sculptor
 Up to his proud estate, my influence
 Had ne'er been sought by one who knew me well.

OTTAVIO, (*offering a purse.*)

Tut! tut! old man! Here is a better staff
 For thine old age than any he in Rome.
 For seest thou not, that for thy daughter's love,
 'This youth has proffered thee his weak support?
 Be wise. Accept this gold and break with him,
 And let me have thine aid to woo thy daughter.

PERELLI.

Could'st take with confidence unto thy bosom

A maid that with another had broke faith?
 When shall the blood which passion now inflames
 Grow cool—the hottest will grow cold in time—
 Would not some doubt of her fidelity—
 Whose love was but ambition—creep into
 Thy heart and sting it? for 'tis not, believe me,
 Possession of the hand, that gold may buy,
 But faith undoubting each in other's truth,
 Which makes the happiness of wedded life.

OTTAVIO.

Thou dost not—or thou wilt not—understand me.
 I offer thee, and through thee, to thy daughter,
 Gold, houses, lands, and equipage and servants,
 And every thing the world sets value on,
 For fair Enrica's love; denying only—
 Alas, that fate should force me to deny
 To my heart's empress aught!—the name to her,
 Which to my sorrow must another's be,
 Of wife.

PERELLI, (*furiously.*)

To me, bold villain! this to me,
 Her father? [*Snatching OTTAVIO'S dagger and stabbing*
him.] Down to him whose work on earth
 Is done by such as thou! This is the thanks
 A Roman gives thee for thy princely offer!

OTTAVIO.

Rash man ! thy deed hath slain thee and thy daughter ;
 For terrible will be th' Orsini's vengeance
 On the destroyer of ——

[*Faints.*

PERELLI, (*after a pause.*)

Wretched Perelli !

What evil has thy hot ungoverned temper
 Now brought on all thou lov'st ! This noble's friends,
 Who will regard his crime—th' unmanly outrage
 Done to a father's heart—as no offence,
 Will swift destruction bring on me and mine,
 If once this murder is brought home to me.
 Yet how avoid it ? That his visits here
 Were known to some one there can be no doubt ;
 And here he will be sought. Even while I stand,
 Deliberating what I am to do,
 May curious eyes be bent upon me, and
 My fearful secret be already known ;
 And ere I cross the threshold of my home
 The iron grasp of Law shall close upon me.
 Then what, Enrica, will become of thee !
 Who's there ? I surely heard my name pronounced.
 But, no ; oh, no. 'Twas but my fears that spake.
 One thing is clear. I must abandon Rome,
 And what is dearer—though with filial love
 I love my country—you, who have to me

Been dear companions in my happy hours,
 And sweet consolers in adversity ;
 The friends of a long life, I now must leave,
 With scarce a hope that we shall meet again !
 Poor youth ! whose blood has quenched the burning rage
 Thy folly kindled, my first act shall be
 To place thee where thou shalt find sepulture
 In consecrated earth ; and may thy sleep
 Be sweeter there than mine in life can be !

[Takes up OTTAVIO and bears him away.]



SCENE II.

An Apartment in an ancient Palace. Enter CAMILLA.

CAMILLA.

Will that child ne'er return ? Is it not strange,
 That lovers, should they meet ten times a day,
 Have still so much to say to one another ?
 And yet, would I be sworn, they'd find it hard
 To tell to others what 'tis all about.
 Words, words, that spring from nothing, and that lead
 To much the same. Enrica ! Girl, I say !

ENRICA, (*from without.*)

Coming, dear aunt.

CAMILLA.

Ay, coming. So hast said
The last hour past, and yet thou dost not come.
But I'll no longer from my bed, for sleep
Doth weigh so heavily upon my heart,
It scarce hath power to beat.

[*Going.*]

ENRICA, (*entering.*)

Well, here I am.

CAMILLA.

And is Orazio gone at last?

ENRICA.

At last.

CAMILLA.

He had his supper, doubtless, ere he came,
Or he had not so long remained with thee,
Though to discuss your wedding. 'Twas the least
He could have done, to leave thee to thyself
For this one night. I should have had by this
My first sleep o'er, if it had pleased him go
At seasonable time. But what cares he
How others suffer, so no injury
Fall to his share.

ENRICA.

Nay, blame not him, dear aunt,

The fault was none of poor Orazio's.
'Tis my last night of freedom. The last time
That I can play the tyrant. And I could not,
For life of me, forego the chance of showing
The power that still is mine. The silly youth
Had got some jealous fancy in his head,
About that stranger, whom I told thee of,
That, like an evil spirit, has of late
Hung on my steps, and tempted me with offers
Of wealth and pleasures for myself, and—what
He knew would weigh far more with me than these—
Provision for the age of my dear father,
If for his love I would but give him mine.

CAMILLA.

And thou didst treat his offers with the scorn
They merited.

ENRICA.

But which Orazio knew not.
And so I threw out hints about this stranger,
That set his fiery temper in a blaze;
And then took pains to feed it, 'till his rage
Had grown a conflagration. Then I had
My own work to undo—no easy task—
Ere I could let him go; for 'twould be strange
To part in anger on our wedding eve.

CAMILLA.

Perhaps, perhaps ; yet, after marriage, parting
With downright hate is now a thing so common,
That people seldom think to call it strange.
With all thy wisdom, child, thou yet hast got
A deal to learn. But what can keep thy father ?

ENRICA.

The friends whose company is aye preferred
To all the world ; the gods and goddesses
Of the old time, who have their worshippers
Even in our day 'mong those within whose souls
True love is cherished of the beautiful ;
Though to my eyes, and to my heart as well,
The holy meekness of the Virgin Mother,
The love that radiates the infant face
Of Him she folds so fondly to her bosom,
More deeply are imbued with beauty than
Aught classic art hath sculptured. But my father
Thinks not with me. His soul is in the past,
And all his efforts but to reproduce it.
And though his hand, with ready skill obeying
The promptings of his genins, has bestowed
Whate'er of grace or grandeur they possess,
The forms that crowd his studio are to him
As full of life as thou or I ; and sometimes

I think he hath a stronger love for them
Than me—his only child.

CAMILLA:

I have no patience
With what he calls devotion to his art,
And love for things that have nor life nor reason !
Had he but listened to a fool's advice—
Yet one, perhaps, who knows as much as some
Who make more boast—he might, with half the labour
He throws away upon his senseless idols,
By any handicraft, have made more money
Than would the sale of twenty Venuses,
Junoes, or Dians, each a master-piece,
Put in his purse.

ENRICA.

Art thou my father's sister ?
But thou art weary. Kiss me, and good night. (*Kisses
her.*)
Now hie thee to thy bed. I've here some work,
Will till my father comes beguile the time.

[*Exit* CAMILLA.]

ENRICA, *taking her work, sits down at a table. After a short
time lets it fall from her hands, and continues.*]

And so to-morrow morn I am to wed !
To-morrow morn rise up in maiden freedom ;—
And then ;—What then ? Why, with a word, resign

My sovereignty into another's hands,
 And be thenceforth whate'er that other wills—
 In every thing, perhaps, but name, a slave!
 Well, after all, 'twere not so very hard
 To be even that, when love has forged the chain
 Which to the master binds the slave. (*Starting up.*)
 My father!

Enter Perelli, (cautiously bolting the door behind him.)

PERELLI, (*in a whisper.*)

Are we alone?

ENRICA.

We are.

PERELLI.

Where is thy aunt?

ENRICA.

In bed, and doubtless sleeping.

PERELLI.

That is well.

Enrica, my poor girl! I bring thee news
 Will test thy courage. What, already pale
 And trembling! How wilt thou abide the tempest
 When the first breathings of the gale affright thee?

ENRICA.

In Heaven's sweet name, dear father, speak thy news.

PERELLI.

Thou lovest this old palace? which, forsaken
By its proud lords, has now for many years
A kindly shelter been to such as we.

ENRICA.

I do indeed. It is the only home
I e'er have known. The rudest hut on earth
Is dear to him whose childhood it hath sheltered,
For 'tis so natural to love the thing
That one has earliest known.

PERELLI.

It is, it is.

And lov'st thou Rome?

ENRICA.

The mistress of the world!

My heart leaps up when I but think upon
Her wondrous past, and still more wondrous present,
A miracle of God's protecting love
For him who fills the place of holy Peter.
O who that is so blessed as t' have been born
A child of hers, would love not glorious Rome?
Ay, glorious 'mid decay!

PERELLI.

And well as these

Thou lov'st Orazio?

ENRICA.

I'm to be his wife ;
And in a wife's affection for her husband
Is love of home, of country—all things lost.

PERELLI.

Then, with so much to love, thou wilt less miss
Thy father when he's gone. Listen, Enrica.
I have done that to-night which puts my life
In peril.

ENRICA.

Father !

PERELLI.

Cling not to me, child,
But nerve thy heart to hear the worst at once.
My crime is—murder ! and I must— (*she faints*) O
Heaven !

The word has murdered her. Poor, timid dove,
How little art thou fitted for the trials
The very love thy father bears thee has
Exposed thee to.

ENRICA, (*reviving.*)

Come, father, let us go.

PERELLI.

Go whither, darling ?

ENRICA.

To what place thou wilt,
So that we leave the danger at a distance
Which threatens thee in Rome.

PERELLI.

Orazio ?

ENRICA.

Will, if he love me, come to us, when we
Have found a certain refuge. Should he not,
There will be none to share with thee the duty
Of thy Enrica.

PERELLI.

True Bianca's daughter !

But no, this must not be.

ENRICA.

My dearest father,
I pray thee do not bid me stay behind.
I ne'er have disobeyed thee, and I would not
At such a time oppose my wish to thine.
But I shall die if thou dost leave me here
Uncertain of thy fate. And shouldst thou fall
Beneath the weight of suffering thou must bear
Where'er thou goest, who into thy heart,
So deeply wounded, will the healing balm
Of comfort pour like her who hath so often
Thy soother been in sickness and in grief?

PERELLI.

Well, be it so; yet much against my will
I yield to thy entreaties.

ENRICA.

Bless, O bless thee!

PERELLI.

Then get thee ready, for in one hour's time
Must we begin our flight.

ENRICA.

The half of that

I do not ask for needful preparation.

[PERELLI *withdraws into an inner room.*]

ENRICA.

Orazio! poor, dear Orazio!
Thou wilt be wroth to find thyself deserted,
Even at the hour should see us at the altar,
To ratify the vows, were made long since
By two fond hearts, of love and faith to each.
And thou wilt chide, revile, and, in thine anger,
May'st even curse—No, no! thou wilt not curse,
For seeming fickleness—and only seeming—
Her who, although she saw thee wed another,
Would couple blessings with thy name in dying.
O no, thou wilt not curse! and some days hence,
Or weeks, or months—they will seem years to me!

The trusty messenger will come, and say,
"Hie thee, young lover, to the arms of her
Who eager waits to bless thy constancy!"

ONE passing without sings.

Never despair! never despair!
The darkest of nights has had ever a morrow,
And time had a balm for the deadliest sorrow,
Then hope from the past for the future still borrow,
And never, O never despair!

ENRICA.

O blessings on thee, minstrel! may thy song,
By zephyrs wafted to Orazio's ear,
Bear to his heart its sweet philosophy,
And teach him manly patience.

Here I stand

In idleness, when on the coming moment
Depend the life and safety of my father.
O shame, Enrica! love should be more prompt.

A C T I I.

SCENE I.

The Coliseum, partially lighted by the moon. MALDONADO, coming out of the shadow of the ruins, leans against a broken column.

MALDONADO.

THEY little know of solitude who bid us
In mountains seek it, or the pathless forest,
Or far off isle amid the waste of waters,
Where print has ne'er been left by foot of man.
No, the true solitude is loneliness.
And how can one know that where there is aught
To mind him of the many links which bind
Man to the brotherhood of man? And where,
Beneath the sway of nature's sovereignty,
Is there a spot that something does not this?
The ever pleasant sound of running brook;
The dash of the cascade, or moan of ocean;
The wind at play among green boughs, or shrieking
A hoarse defiance to the powers of earth;
The aimless floating of a summer cloud
In the deep blue of heaven; the widestretched wings
Of mighty tempest that shut out the sky;
The carol of a bird; an humble flower,
Which by the wind is planted in strange soil,

Will in his mind call up the recollection
 Of scenes or objects loved in days gone by.
 And while th' affections have vitality,
 Or rather, while to living thing they cling,
 The curse of loneliness he cannot know.
 But when the green love of his heart is withered,
 Or, living, nothing clasps in its embrace
 That death has touched not, wander where he will,
 He cannot fly from solitude. It is
 Within his breast—a present desolation!
 And whether 'mid the ruins of the past,
 Grey with the moss of ages, or the dry
 Hot thoroughfare, where crowds with crowds commingle,
 The feeling that he ever is *alone*
 Weighs down the spirit fortune could not humble,
 When, like a bird whose heart the fowler's shaft
 Has sudden pierced, Hope drops to earth, and dies!
 Here (*laying his hand upon his heart*) is my solitude.

With mine own hand

Did I unchain the passions there shut up,
 And, where a Paradise once blossomed, they
 Have made a howling waste!

How, Maldonado?

Can sight of these hoar ruins, which so oft
 Thy boyish gambols witnessed, change thy nature,
 And set thee rhapsodizing like a poet
 Who owns the influence of the moon? Come, rouse thee

To thought of that which brought thee hither, for
 Thou must not hence till thou hast left some token
 Of the dear love thou bear'st thy native city,
 Who, like a cruel stepdame, drove thee forth
 To crime and outlawry. But every wrong
 From her hast thou repaid a thousand fold,
 'Till she, who trampled on and would have crushed thee,
 Now pales with fear to hear the name but whispered
 Of "MALDONADO, KING OF THE CAMPAGNA!"

OTTAVIO, (*coming feebly forward.*)

I pray thee, gentle stranger, lend thine aid
 To one whose life is nearly drained, and faints
 From loss of blood. Conduct me to the palace
 Of Count Orsini; and, if thanks or gold
 Can recompense thee for thy pains, thou'lt not
 Go unrewarded.

MALDONADO, (*aside.*)

An Orsini suing

To me for aid! Infernal Powers! I thank you!
 (*Aloud.*) Let me support thee. I've some friends at
 hand
 Will help me bear thee hence. (*Gives a low whistle,*
when

Enter GIACOMO and another Robber. Aside to them.)

Timely encountered.

(*Aloud.*) This gentleman is ill;—with your assistance

I would convey him home. (*Aside to the robbers.*) Bestir yourselves.

Beyond the city get without delay;
And with all speed then bear him to the camp.
His ransom would repay a greater service.

[*Exeunt* GIACOMO and Robber supporting OTTAVIO.

Enter GIAN-ANGELO from the opposite side.

MALDONADO.

Thou here, Gian-Angelo?

GIAN-ANGELO.

Should I be absent
And danger threaten thee?

MALDONADO.

What danger, boy?

GIAN-ANGELO.

Art not in Rome, where to be found is death.

MALDONADO.

Ay, to be *found*. But I shall not be found.
Who in this bronzed visage could discern
The features of the youth who, ten years since,
For such a deed as in the rich and noble
Were deemed a venial fault, was driven forth
To herd with felous? But thou understand'st not.
Howe'er, there is no danger.

GIAN-ANGELO.

Understand not?
 They tell me that my mind is weak. It is.
 I know my reason is no match for thine.
 But, Ugo, thou art all I have to love;
 And love in such as I supplies the place
 By reason held in others. Well I know
 Thou hast been wronged. I never asked the cause;
 And will not ask;—but I, who know thy heart,
 So loving and so trusting in its nature,
 Do know they wronged thee, who did drive thee hence.
 Then let us go. If they, who wronged thee then,
 Should find thee here, they will to their first wrong
 Add yet another, and more grievous wrong—
 A wrong to thee and me, for in thy life
 Is mine bound up, and both will they destroy.

MALDONADO.

No fear of that;—yet will I humour thee.

Exeunt.

 SCENE II.

An open country, with Rome in the distance. Enter PERELLI, with ENRICA, in male attire.

PERELLI.

Majestic Rome! that on thy throne of hills,
 Discrowned though thou art, still sit'st a queen,

To whom the proudest of the earth do homage !
I, who have gloried in thy glories, and
Have wept for thine afflictions ; who have loved
The meanest fragment of thy former greatness
More than all splendours of the world beside,
Leave thee self-banished ! Yet, alas ! not so.
But driven from thee by the fear that still
Pursues the guilty.

ENRICA.

Father, talk not thus.

There is no guilt without premeditation.
And though I grieve for that which thou hast done,
As thou a noble impulse didst obey,
In striking down the foolish youth who did,
By his base offer, rouse thy just resentment,
Thou shalt not wrong thyself to call that crime
Which is but thy misfortune.

Lo ! the dawn,
With kindling eye, and cheek like youthful hero's
Flushed with assured hope of early triumph,
Comes on apace. Then let us to our speed,
For we have many weary miles before us
Ere we repose in safety. Hark ! the tramp
Of horses' feet the morning stillness breaks.
We are pursued. Quick ! quick ! or we are taken !
O Blessed Mother ! save us from that peril !

[Exeunt hurriedly.]

SCENE III.

A street in Rome, on one side of which is the house of ORAZIO, and on the other the walls of a convent. Enter FELICE and other WEDDING GUESTS, and arrange themselves under the windows of ORAZIO'S house.

FELICE.

Ho, sluggard, ho! awake. The morn, ashamed
 To find thee sleeping at an hour like this,
 Is blushing deeply as the bride who waits thee
 To lead her to the altar, where the blaze
 Of tapers and the robed priest proclaim
 All things in readiness for thy espousals.
 Hast thou forgotten 'tis thy wedding day?
 Up, sluggard, up!

[The Convent bell rings the "ANGELUS." They kneel.]

HYMN.—CONVENT CHOIR, *assisted by the Wedding Guests.*

With the hymnings and the incense
 That from grateful earth ascend,
 When to gladness morn awakes her,
 We the voice of praise would blend:—

Praise of thee, O Sovereign Lady!
 Peerless lily, pure as fair,
 Mystic rose, of fragrance sweetest,
 Beautiful beyond compare!

Radiant dawn, the rise preceding
 Of that SUN whose heavenly ray
 Turns to light the night of error
 On the soul of man that lay!

Mother of the generations
 Unto life eternal born,
 We to praise thee blend our voices
 With the hymnings of the morn. [*They rise.*

FELICE.

What, art thou sleeping still?
 Why then, sleep on. I will myself go wed
 The beautiful Enrica, who, I doubt not,
 Would to no husband even me prefer.

ORAZIO, (*coming from the house.*)

Welcome, my friends.

FELICE.

Well, better late than never.
 And yet, methinks, a little earlier welcome
 Had been more gracious, as I warrant thee,
 So thinks the bride, whose ancient kinswoman
 Now comes this way, to chide thy tardiness.

ORAZIO.

Pray Heaven! she bringeth no ill news. (*To CAMILLA,
 who enters greatly excited.*) What now?

CAMILLA.

O 'twas most kind! most courteous! to steal
 A maiden from the tender care of one
 Who has watched o'er her with a mother's love
 From helpless infancy to womanhood,
 And wed her as thou wouldst a nameless foundling!
 Orazio, I thought not this of thee!

ORAZIO.

What didst not think, good aunt ?

CAMILLA.

Good aunt indeed !

Where is Enrica ?

ORAZIO.

Is she not at home ?

CAMILLA.

Not in her father's home, if that thou mean'st.

FELICE.

She has but gone her morning prayers to offer
At some near shrine. She will be back anon.

CAMILLA.

Not so, not so. Had she gone on such errand,
Would she have left this writing on my pillow ?

[Gives a paper to ORAZIO.]

ORAZIO, (*reading.*)

“Farewell, dear aunt, and till we meet again,
With blessings blend the thoughts of thy—ENRICA.”

[Throwing down and stamping upon the paper.]

The blessings I will blend with thoughts of thee,
Thou gilded serpent! are the bitterest curses
That ever sprang from the indignant heart
To hiss upon the tongue! I see it all.
Her seeming love for me was but a lure
To bring into her toils the stranger youth

Whose suit she did affect to slight, until
 She could no longer play her double part,
 And now has fled with him.

CAMILLA.

Out on thee, ribald!

That with unmanly slander dar'st asperse
 The unstained honour of a Roman maiden!
 She never used—she had no need to use—
 An art to bring unto her feet that youth,
 Who hour by hour his offers pressed upon her,
 Of wealth unbounded and unequalled splendour,
 Would she but give a moiety of the love
 She foolishly had lavished on another.
 But she did spurn him, like a true Perelli,
 Nor gave a thought to what she cast away,
 For one who basely now maligns the worth
 He knew not how to prize.

ORAZIO.

Let her disprove

The doubt she has created; cast aside
 The mystery wherein she now is wrapped,
 And to this heart, whereof she was the life,
 Will I so grapple her that all the world
 Should never tear her thence. But do not ask me,
 When her disgrace is patent to all men,
 To shut my eyes, and say it is not so.
 Enrica, O Enrica! (*Covers his face with his hands.*)

FELICE.

But her father ?

What thinketh he ?

CAMILLA.

In truth, I thought not of him.

But now will hie me back. This taugled skein

He may unravel for us. (*Going, then stops.*) Here
comes Giotto.

Enter GIOTTO.

Where didst thou leave thy master ?

GIOTTO.

Is he not

Among you here ? Ye saints, what can this mean !

FELICE.

Can what mean, boy ?

GIOTTO.

Åh me ! my heart misgives me !

I went to call my master, as my wont.

He was not in his chamber. Then I sought

His studio. No foot had crossed its threshold

Till mine this morn, and when I did admit

The cheerful day, its light fell on a pool

In which this dagger lay, clotted with gore.

FELICE, (*taking the dagger.*)

'Tis one of curious workmanship. And see,

Here is a name engraven on the hilt.
"Ottavio Orsini." San Felice!
What evil have we not to fear when aught
Pertaining to that race is found among us!
Beneath the cover of the night, some deed
Of darkness hath been wrought, and poor Perelli.
The kind, the generous, the good Perelli!
Has been struck down by one who is too high
For our short arms to reach. O for some Brutus,
Armed with Heaven's justice, from the heights of power
To hurl the Tarquins that now trample on us!
But patience! patience!

CAMILLA.

O my murdered brother!
My sweet Enrica! O my heart will break!
And gladly would I bid it do so, knew I
Where ye are laid, that I might drag me thither,
And lay me down and die.

ORAZIO.

My brain is burning.
I know not what to think, nor how to act.
If wrong has come to them, nor rank nor power
Shall shield the aggressor from my just revenge.
But if—

FELICE.

But if! Away with these mean doubts.

If lives Enrica, she with honour lives.
 But if no longer of the earth, no spirit
 That worships now among the hosts of heaven
 Than hers is purer. But why stand we here,
 Like wondering gossips, wasting precious moments
 In vain surmises, when, by timely action,
 We might prevent an outrage—or avenge it?

Enter PELLEGRINO.

PELLEGRINO.

News! News! Great news, my masters! Wonderful news! Terrible news! (*All gather around him, except CAMILLA, who remains apart weeping, and ORAZIO and FELICE, who are conversing together; FELICE appearing to urge something upon ORAZIO to which he does not seem disposed to listen.*) The city of Rome;—the great city of Rome;—the mighty city of Rome is in a state of siege! Her dignity has been insulted; her governor has been insulted; His Holiness has been insulted; and WE have been insulted!

ONE OF THE CROWD.

What gabbling's this? Speak to the purpose, goose.

PELLEGRINO.

Goose, indeed! Well, if I am a goose, I'm not the first of my kind that's been of service to Rome.

ANOTHER OF THE CROWD.

What is thy news?

PELLEGRINO.

This is my news, and you might ha' had it long ago, if you had not interrupted me. Ugo Maldonado, who, as all the world knows, calls himself "King of the Campagna," at a late hour last night, or rather at a very early one this morning—think of his audacity!—actually knocked up the watchman of the Porta Salara, who was sleeping soundly, as every good watchman should, and, giving him his name, desired him to bear his compliments to the governor, respectfully to salute the Pope, and to tell the Count Orsini, that, unless he shall pay upon demand, into the hands of one whom he will send, the sum of five thousand scudi, the head of his son, the Count Ottavio—now a prisoner in the Abruzzi—shall be sent home to him without the body to which it belongs. Don't ye call that news?

ONE OF THE CROWD.

Yes ;—of thine own framing.

PELLEGRINO.

Dost doubt my veracity, sirrah? Thou shalt answer me for this. I tell thee, the fact is known to every fool in Rome, but thee. And there are placards at all the corners, offering a reward equal to the demand of Maldonado—five thousand scudi!—to any who will bring this robber into the city—dead or alive. Yes, and many

citizens are already in arms, to go out against him ; and by the beard of my grandmother ! here they come.

Enter a number of armed CITIZENS, with music and banners.

FELICE, (*coming forward.*)

What does this mean ?

A CITIZEN.

We are preparing to go to the Abruzzi, with the hope of gaining some renown, and perhaps a little money, by ridding the country of the notorious Maldonado. We only want a leader of some experience to march at once, and have come to see if we could not prevail upon Orazio Fontana, who, as you know, so greatly distinguished himself in the late war with Venice, to be our Captain.

FELICE, (*aside.*)

The hand of Heaven's in this !

[*Returning to ORAZIO.*]

Now is the time to dissipate thy doubts,
Or else confirm them. If Enrica's false—
Which I believe not, or if true—as I,
And all but thou believe—now may'st thou prove.
Lead on these men against this bandit chief,
Who in his hands holds young Orsini's life,
And, as thy doubts suggest, Enrica's too,
And do thy country and thyself a service—
By ridding her of this audacious robber,

And thee of that poor sneaking fiend Suspicion,
That tempts thee to destroy thy happiness.

Orazio.

Well, as thou wilt. It is a far less evil
To throw away my life at once, than hold it
When all its worth and glory are departed.

[Coming forward.]

Friends, I am with you ; and to what one man
Can do to vindicate the dignity
Of Rome, now outraged by her recreant son,
Here pledge myself. If in this enterprise
We shall succeed, the honour and the profit
Are justly yours. But if we fail—

CITIZENS.

No fear.

Orazio.

Blame not the will, but the ability
Of him who leads you.

A CITIZEN.

We shall not blame either.
But think that Heaven, offended by our sins,
Will not consent that we should do its work.

*[All now gather around ORAZIO, except FELICE, who has
joined CAMILLA, whom he appears to be consoling.]*

A C T I I I .

S C E N E .

An open space in the Abruzzi, with the Robbers' Camp in the background.

Enter GIACOMO and GIUSEPPE.

GIACOMO.

A BOLD feat of the Captain's.

GIUSEPPE.

And a mad one !

'Twill bring all Rome upon us. We in peace
No longer shall be left to the pursuits
Which have of late been found so profitable.
And if we are no more to take a purse
Without the jeopardy of life, 'twere better
To turn at once to honesty, if that
Will give us safety.

GIACOMO.

Frightened at a shadow !

Bring Rome upon us ? What have we to fear
From Rome, whose power is of the things that were ?
Rome has too much to do to guard herself
Against her friends, whose proffered love has in it
More danger than the open hate of foes,

To waste the little strength she still has left
In vain attempts to chastise Maldonado.
What army, think'st thou, could dislodge a force
Even small as ours, from such a fortress as
Hath Nature raised for us in the Abruzzi ?
And though we are not many, we are strong
In that which is the strength of weakness—Union.
Then let Rome come upon us if she will
Forget her prudence in her anger, and
We'll try conclusions with her. We will show
The weakness of that strength which would oppose
The front of resolution.

GIUSEPPE.

O, 'tis well

For thee, who wast a soldier bred, to talk so.
But I'm a man of peace—an humble tailor—
Who ne'er could bear the sight of blood, and have
Near fainting been if I but pricked my finger.

GIACOMO.

Why then become a robber ?

GIUSEPPE.

A vile plot

Was formed against me by some wicked members
Of our time-honoured craft—

GIACOMO.

Time-honoured craft !

GIUSEPPE.

Why, yes ; time-honoured. 'Twas the only trade
In Eden known.

GIACOMO.

And the first tailor was—
A woman. Goody Eve did stitch the leaves
Whereof she made the breeches of her husband.
And thence are tailors never since called—men.

GIUSEPPE.

Why, the first robber was a woman too.
That apple given Adam by his wife—
I feel its core still sticking in my throat !—
She stole for him. Are robbers therefore women ?
But, as I said, a plot was formed against me
By members of our craft, who swore away
My character, and uttered threats against
My very life, because they knew me honest.
Of course, then nought was left to me but flight.
And so—

GIACOMO.

To save alike thy name and life,
Thou camest where the one is lost forever,
And t' other hourly perilled. Sapient Beppo
That gav'st the wether to the wolf to keep !
But hush ! here comes the young Gian-Angelo.

GIUSEPPE.

The knave whose cue it is to play the fool,
That unsuspected he may note our acts,
Our words, nay, even our looks, and, giving them
A meaning that was ne'er intended for them,
Report us to the Captain as less loyal
Than we should be regarded. By my valour!

GIACOMO.

A dreadful oath is that for thee, Giuseppe!
Art not afraid thou mightest be forsworn?

GIUSEPPE.

I fear not that.

GIACOMO.

Art right,—thou need'st not fear.
Well, with that fearful oath, what wouldst have pre-
faced?

GIUSEPPE.

I would have said, if thou hadst let me speak,
That ever at the sight of yon smooth knave,
I feel the fingers of this strong right hand
Grow rigid as they close upon the palm,
As if they had his throat within the grasp
May yet encircle it.

GIACOMO.

Thou murderous wretch!

But that I know thy coward heart would ne'er
 Let thee act out what thy dark soul conceives,
 For that avowal would I strike thee dead!

GIUSEPPE.

Ha, ha! well said! Thou thought'st I was in earnest?
 Why, bless thy simple heart, I did but jest!
 Harm him? Gian-Angelo? Not to be made
 The leader of our gallant troop would I
 Do harm to him more than I would to thee.

GIACOMO.

I do not doubt thee! But, friend, have a care
 How thou dost choose a subject for thy jest.

[Retire up, and exeunt severally.]

Enter GIAN-ANGELO.

GIAN-ANGELO.

How beautiful is all that meets me here!
 The smiling earth, the waving trees, the flowers
 That look up at me with such trustfulness,
 And yon calm Heaven, into whose blue depths
 I gaze unwearied, seeking with mine eyes
 To penetrate to Him whose throne outshines
 The midday sun, and, as they say, whose court
 Is paved with stars. And yet—'tis very strange!—
 I never am so sad as when all Nature
 Seems thus to breathe of peace and happiness.

And why? 'Tis that I may not hope to know
 Or peace or happiness unshared by Ugo.
 For if not shared by him, the blessedness
 Of Heaven itself were hardly such to me.
 Alas, my brother! wherefore wilt thou bend
 Thy noble nature to the purposes
 For which these base men use thee! Thee they serve
 For their own ends; and though they make of thee
 A present god, they one day yet may cast
 Their idol down, and tread it into dust!

[Retires slowly up.]

Enter PERELLI and ENRICA.

PERELLI.

Mischance upon mishance! and woe on woe!
 O better were it to have staid in Rome,
 And meet the penalty my crime deserved,
 Than bring my lamb into the very den
 Of the devouring wolf!

ENRICA.

Not so, dear father.
 The penalty thy deed—call it not crime!—
 Had met in Rome were death—death to us both,
 For I the horrid sight could ne'er survive
 To see thee die a malefactor's death!

PERELLI.

Dear loving heart!

ENRICA.

But here is present safety,
And for the future—hope.

PERELLI.

Alas, what hope?
Our lives, if that it please our ruffian captors
To leave us them, must be in slavery spent.
For though no danger menaced us in Rome,
What is there left to us to purchase freedom?
No single coin, for all our little store
I have we been rifled of; and as for friends,
Who is there that would pay our ransom for us?
Alas, not one! Who would—cannot; and they
Who could—will not,—they love their gold too well.
Look not so pained;—I did not mean Orazio,
Whose heart I know is richer than his purse.
And if thy sex should be discovered—

ENRICA.

Hush!
Breathe not that secret to the winds, my father,
Lest they should babble of it.

PERELLI (*impatiently.*)

But with life,
And safety of the body—which are most
That we can hope—how is the mind to live,

When rudely torn from all that made its life?
 To wear away the hours in idleness,
 Forbid so much as to stretch forth a hand
 To pluck the golden fruit, that years and years
 The heart has hungered for, placed in our reach,
 And crush with weight of inactivity
 The delicate structures which the brain has reared,
 And that should have an immortality
 Enduring as the soul! O death were better
 Than such a life!

ENRICA.

The hand indeed awhile
 May be deprived its power, but the free spirit
 Will not be hindered in its destined work;
 And yet the world shall with some form be gladdened—
 The child of bondage—that for grace and beauty
 Shall match thy Dian.

PERELLI.

Well thou know'st the weakness
 Of thy old father. (*After a pause.*) I will not deny
 That I have toiled untiringly—have yearned
 With an insatiate desire for fame.
 Yet, when I think how short the longest life
 The goddess of my worship doth bestow
 On them who love her most and serve her best:—
 How perishable all that man creates,

And yet how oft the work outlives the name
Of him whose brain conceived—whose hand achieved it;
I sigh, and even blush, for mine own folly.
Why there are cities, girl, in other lands;—
Whose broad foundations deep in earth are laid,—
Whose royal palaces and gorgeous temples,
Where countless human hearts have beat together,
Stood proudly up, and seemed with strength endued
To battle with the elements unharmed,
And on themselves roll back the waves of time,
Within whose massive walls—now thicker grown
With the accumulated soil of ages—
And shapeless ruins is no shadow cast
From living man,—whose history is—a blank;—
Whose very names Tradition has forgotten!
With such a moral to the tale of life,
What is the worth of fame?

ENRICA.

Here comes the man
Who hath our lives and fortunes in his hands.
His form is human; and it cannot be
But in his breast a human heart is lodged
That may be moved to mercy. I'll essay it.

PERELLI.

Take heed, my child, lest thou arouse his anger.

ENRICA.

Fear not for me. (*To Maldonado, who now enters.*)

I pray thee hear me, sir.

MALDONADO. (*Stopping.*)

What wouldst thou, boy ?

ENRICA.

The freedom of my father,
A weak old man, whom thou wouldst find a burthen,
And freedom for the child whose duty 'tis
To tend upon his age.

MALDONADO.

What can ye give
For ransom ?

ENRICA.

Nothing. We have but our thanks
To offer ; and our prayers, that Heaven may not
Be deaf to thee when thou shalt cry for mercy.

MALDONADO.

Thanks fill not coffers, boy, and ours are empty.
And not the prayers of all the saints in Heaven
Would move the Sovereign Ruler to forgive
Such rebel to his grace as I have been.

[*Passing on.*]

(ENRICA, *detaining him.*)

O, if thy sinless childhood ever knew
 The blessedness of home ;—securely slept
 Beneath the sacred roof-tree of a father,
 While at thy couch a mother's love kept watch ;—
 Think what is due to his grey hairs, and bid
 This reverend old man go forth in freedom,
 And let me, to repay some of the debt
 Due his past care, go with him.

MALDONADO.

I have not

The power thou dost suppose me to possess.
 Though leader, I am not sole master here,
 And without ransom cannot set you free.
 Yet this much will I do. If thou remain,
 To serve—or rather be companion to—
 A youth of thine own age who dwells with us,
 Thy father shall depart.

PERELLI.

And leave my child ?

That will I never !

ENRICA.

No ; together we
 Will go or stay. Whatever be our lot
 It shall not be divided.

MALDONADO.

As ye will

[Going ; stops, and after a pause.

One offer can I more. Within yon tent
A wounded prisoner now lies, by whom
Must our exhausted treasury be supplied.
To Rome shall one of you with our demand
For ransom, and if he speed well, ye both
Shall go at large.

ENRICA, (*eagerly.*)

I'll be thy messenger ;

For I have youth, and health, and strength of limb,
All which my father lacks, promptly to do
Thy bidding, and a tongue with eloquence
To plead the cause of yon poor prisoner,
Because in that I plead my father's too,
And turn even selfishness to charity.
Instruct me what to do, and let me hence.

MALDONADO.

This readiness to serve me hath a show
Of filial love for this old man, that doth
Persuade me strongly of thine honesty.
But shouldst thou in thine errand fail, what then ?

ENRICA.

I will return to share my father's fate.

MALDONADO.

What, though that rate were slavery for life?

ENRICA.

Ay, even that dreadful fate! for then would he
More need my aid than were he free, because
The chains too heavy for his aged limbs
Would my young strength sustain.

MALDONADO.

A noble lad!

But when in Rome, surrounded by thy friends,
With freedom there, and chance of happiness,
And slavery here, with certain misery,
For years, perhaps for life—and thou art young,
With the warm blood of youth, and youth's high hopes—
Couldst thou renounce home, kindred, hope, and come
Back to a living grave for one man's sake?

ENRICA.

That man's my father, sir.

MALDONADO.

I like thy answer,
And think thou may'st be trusted.

PERELLI, (*earnestly.*)

That she may.

MALDONADO.

She may? she may? What masking have we here?

[Seizes ENRICA, who submits calmly to his scrutiny.]

Or youth or maid, thou hast no woman's spirit.

Yet this is no boy's face. Girl, hast thou dared
To trifle with me?

ENRICA, (*freeing herself.*)

It is not my fault,

If my poor face less manly is than thine,

For it hath known few years and fewer sorrows.

But though my face be woman's, in my heart

Is nothing of the weakness which the world—

With justice or without—ascribes to her.

O then, brave sir, I pray thee doubt me not;

But let me have thy message, and be gone.

[Without appearing to hear her, MALDONADO walks apart, communing with himself.]

PERELLI.

O my accursed tongue! All, all is lost!

ENRICA.

Seem not to fear;—we may avert suspicion.

[She affects a show of cheerfulness, and leading PERELLI aside, appears to converse with him unconcernedly.]

MALDONADO, (*coming forward.*)

It must be so. Her sex speaks in her face

Not less than in her voice. And what a face!
Such might have been the face of Brutus' Portia,
Or mother of the Gracchi when a maid.
No daughter she of our degenerate day,
But one of ancient Rome's, the type of all
Most lovely and most loveable in woman;—
In whom were faultlessness of form and feature,
Commanding dignity and sweet reserve,
Undoubting trust with noble self-reliance,
Together blent to form one perfect whole.
Of such a mother might a race be born
To win us back the glories of the past,
And from the land, which now they hold in thrall,
Sweep the besotted tyrants, who have wrung
From human hearts the wine that makes them drunk!
Gods of the olden time! how my heart swells
With fierce anticipation of the hour
When son of mine shall set his foot upon
The necks of these oppressors;—raise from earth
A long down-trodden people, and erase
By patriot deeds the blot a father's crimes
Shall leave upon the name of MALDONADO.
Come hither both. (*They advance.*)

I've thought it not quite safe
To send this youth alone to yonder city,
Where innocence is every hour exposed
To snares the wary cannot always shun. :

Nor can I send for his protection any
Of my rude followers,—the citizens,
I fear me much, so well they love my people,
Would scarce consent they should return to us.

ENRICA.

Thou mock'st us, sir.

MALDONADO.

In faith, I mock you not,
For thou art one that I, at any risk,
Would save from peril. But to this old man,
For whom there is less danger, I'll entrust
The message which at first I meant for thee.

ENRICA.

O not to him! A terrible mishap
Has forced him fly the city, where even now
Unpitying Revenge, whose tongue is hot
With rage, is seeking him, that he may slake
His thirst in blood.

MALDONADO.

What was his crime?

ENRICA.

No crime.

He did—perhaps too readily—resent
An insult to his honour, and struck down

A foolish youth of an illustrious house.
 And, well thou knowst, no mercy would be shown
 To one judged guilty of a noble's death.

MALDONADO.

Do I not know it? Wherefore am I here,
 Consorting with the outcasts of my kind?
 An Ishmael 'gainst whom are all men's hands,
 As now this hand is against every man?
 Feared, hated, banned!—a miserable robber?
 Why that in reckless youth, in heat of blood,
 Set boiling by a gibe at my condition—
 An honest *poor* man's son—by a proud noble,
 A silken, soft patrician, who had come
 Between me and the maid whose troth I held,
 And bade me stand aside while he should pour
 The poison of his words into her ear,
 Did I become a homicide;—the blow
 I struck at random reached the villain's heart;
 And knowing well what justice would be dealt
 To one of my estate, I fled the city,
 To be the scourge of yonder bloated tyrants.

ENRICA.

Then must thou see my father cannot go
 To Rome in safety. O do not refuse
 To let me be the bearer of thy message,
 For sake of this poor prisoner. Why pause?

I know thou think'st me not what I appear.
And thou art right.

PERELLI, (*aside to her.*)

Art mad ?

ENRICA.

Not mad, dear father.

I do but throw away a useless mask
To show an honest face. (*To MALDONADO.*) But not
my sex
Shall e'er by me be pleaded to excuse
A fault in duty or a broken pledge,
And, on the honour of a Roman maiden,
Howe'er I speed, I will return to share
The fortunes of my father.

PERELLI.

Yet her word

Has ne'er been falsified, and will not now.
Then prithee let her go.

MALDONADO.

It cannot be.

If thou wilt bear my message, well ; if not,
Stay here in safety ;—some one else will go
Upon mine errand. But I cannot part,
And will not, with this maiden. Giacomo !
The throne of the Campagna, where alone,

For ten long years, have I—a mateless eagle,
 Upon the topmost bough of blasted tree—
 Set in unsocial power, may well afford
 Room for another, and no one more fit
 To fill the place an empress need not scorn
 Than this fair Roman. Giacomo!

GIACOMO, (*entering.*)

My Chief?

MALDONADO.

Go send thy wife into my grot, and bid her,
 From out the costliest robes she there will find,
 Choose those best fitted for a queen.

[*Exit* GIACOMO.]

(*To* ENRICA.) Thy hand.

ENRICA.

What dost thou mean?

MALDONADO.

To lead thee to the throne
 Where thou art hence to share my sovereignty.

ENRICA.

Do not presume upon the power that Heaven
 Permits thee o'er my liberty to hold.
 Nor o'er my liberty alone, but life,
 For both are in thy hands. But as with one,
 So can I with the other freely part

At honour's bidding. Sir, I am not free
To choose the man whom I would own for lord,
For I've already chosen; and this hand
No more is mine to give, or to withhold,
Than if the Church had blessed my union with
My heart's sole master. Thine I cannot be.
Then let me go upon this errand, and
So earn my father's freedom and my own.

MALDONADO.

I have decided. Thou remainest here,
To be my queen—the sharer of my power
Or else my—slave.

ENRICA.

Thy slave then, if I must,
For not in servitude, or forced or free,
Can there be degradation. But to share
The power which thou by violence hast won
I cannot and I will not. Do not glare
Thus fiercely on me. I would not offend;
But neither will I bow my head in silence,
And yield me to a wrong I can avert.

PERELLI.

I'll do the bidding of this man, my child.
I will to Rome; and should I ne'er return
To claim thy freedom, thou hast still one friend

Who will not rest and thee in bondage. Sir,
 Prepare thy missive with what speed thou may'st,
 And let me hence.

[MALDONADO *withdraws*.

ENRICA.

O jeopard not thy life
 For me, my father. I've no fear of aught
 That man can do if Heaven be on my side.
 And though my guardian angel for a time,
 To prove my strength, his radiant face may hide,
 He will not in this strait abandon me.

PERELLI.

The purpose of this man speaks in his eyes ;
 And more—far more—than life is now in danger.
 Thy purity, which not the breath of slander yet
 Has ever touched, will he tread in the mire,
 Till thou become as vile a thing as he.
 O I would risk all blessings this side Heaven
 To save thee from the dark, the dreadful fate
 That threatens thee here. Yes, I'll to Rome, and there,
 To guard against mishap, first seek Orazio,
 And let him know thy peril. Should I fail—

ENRICA.

Dear father !

PERELLI.

Nay, my child, fear not that I

Will seek out danger. But should danger come,
 There will be one on whom thou may'st rely
 For present help, and future guardianship ;
 And who, when I am gone—

ENRICA.

O talk not thus !

Such words will make a coward of me when
 I should be bravest.

MALDONADO, (*returning.*)

To the Count Orsini

This letter bear. His son Ottavio
 Is prisoner here ; and for his ransom this
 Demands five thousand scudi. Why dost stare ?

PERELLI.

The Count Orsini ?

MALDONADO.

Thou hast doubtless heard
 That name ere now ?

PERELLI.

Alas for me ! I have.
 And he of all men living is the last
 Whom I would choose to meet. One of his house
 Was the unhappy youth my madness slew.

MALDONADO.*

O then, to thee it is I am indebted
For the good chance that makes mine enemy
An instrument the coffers to replenish
Of our poor band? for he thou deemest slain
The prisoner is who lies in yonder tent.

PERELLI.

Can this be true?

ENRICA.

O Heaven! most heartily
I thank thee, that the stain of blood rests not
Upon my father's hands! All evils now,
Since thy dear life is saered from the laws,
I cheerfully can meet. Go then to Rome;
And in thine absence do not fear that harm
Shall fall on me. And tell Orazio,
Though we should never meet again on earth,
When meet we do, I shall not be less his
Than when we parted. Now good angels speed thee.

PERELLI, (*embracing her.*)

And guard from every ill mine only treasure!

[*Exit.*]

[ENRICA remains looking after PERELLI, while MALDONADO stands gazing earnestly upon her.]

A C T I V.

SCENE I.

Camp of the Robbers. Robbers disposed in groups. Some stretched upon the earth asleep; others playing at cards and dice, and others sitting at a table drinking. Among the last, GIUSEPPE.

GIUSEPPE.

HANG fear, say I; and hang remorse! What, lads,
Have we bold hearts to fear? and for remorse,
It should not be so much as named among us.
Remorse and fear! Let cravens fear the law
Who to the law submit; and those weak souls,
Who in the keeping of a shaveling put
Their consciences, turn pale if they but hear
The devil named. We neither do; and therefore
The gibbet of this world, or sulph'rous bath—
Forever kept at boiling heat—of t'other
Can have for us no terrors. We acknowledge
No law but Honour, and no god but Honour.
And while 'gainst Honour we do not offend,
We snap our fingers at Remorse and Fear.
But come, our cups are empty. Let's again
Fill to the brim; and then a rattling chorus.

[They fill and drink, and while they are singing, GIUSEPPE steals away unperceived.]

SONG.—ROBBERS.

How wags the world, my boys, little care we,
 Lords of the treasures of earth and of sea,
 And not the bold eagle in air is more free.

Hurrah for the life of the Robber!

The cot or the castle to us the same,
 And sure is our welcome from damsel and dame:
 We take what we list, and who questions our claim?

Hurrah for the life of the Robber!

O then to the merry, the fearless, the free,
 The terror of tyrants, whoever they be,
 And friends of the friendless, we give three times three!

Hurrah for the life of the Robber!

[*They retire up, and the Scene closes.*]

SCENE II.

The same as Act Third.

Enter GIUSEPPE.

GIUSEPPE.

There is a rumour in the camp, or rather
 A whisper that, except to ears like mine,
 Is scarcely audible, of a reward
 Which has been offered by the government,
 Of many hundred—if not thousand—scudi,
 To any one who shall bring into Rome
 The robber Maldonado.

Of this life

I am aweary ! When she fashioned me,
 Nature's intent, it doubtless was, to make
 An honest man, and that shall not be thwarted.
 I will repent ;—reform ;—return to Rome,
 And make my peace with the offended laws,
 And win a gracious pardon from the Pope,
 By offering—for half of the reward—
 To guide, by paths known only to our troop,
 His enemies unto the secret grot
 Where this bold bandit dwells in kingly state.
 I know he loves me not, nor yet has e'er
 Put trust in me. Then he can claim no love ;
 And if, being needful for my safety, or
 To prove mine honesty, I help to bring
 This man to justice, I betray no trust.
 I will about it ere suspicion glance
 At my design, for were I once suspected,
 No second thought would my destruction cost
 The gentlest of the band of Maldonado.
 But lo ! where comes the chief.

[*Exit.*

Enter MALDONADO.

MALDONADO.

Is't so, indeed ?

Shall I, who never yet, in love or hate,
 Denied my heart the thing it did desire,
 Loose from my grasp what Fortune there has placed,

The crowning bliss of a whole life, because
 That Conscience, who conveniently hath slept
 Through years of violence, now wakes, and backed
 By blustering Honour, joins her voice to his
 In condemnation of the deed I purpose?
 Conscience and Honour! What are they that I
 Should in the hot pursuit of pleasure pause
 To list their idle clamour? (*Looking off.*) Giacomo!
 Bid Antonino come with the Lieutenant,
 A short hour hence, to supper in my tent;
 And see the wine be of the best, and plenty,
 For I would pour to joy a rich libation.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A ruined villa. Enter PELLEGRINO and CAMILLA.

PELLEGRINO.

We'll give our mules a little breathing time, good Camilla, while we sit here and rest, for, after the jolting we've had on the backs of those sorry animals, a little rest will do neither of us any harm. (*They seat themselves on a broken column.*) We ar'n't far from the Abruzzi now, I think, and it isn't altogether safe, when we consider the neighbourhood we're in, for us to get very far in advance of the main body of the army. Didst not hear a footstep?

CAMILLA.

No, nothing but the wind among the ruins.

PELLEGRINO.

I believe thou'rt right;—'twas nothing but the wind.
But look. Isn't that like a man on yonder heap of
stones?

CAMILLA.

The shadow only is it of a cloud
Athwart the sun that's drifting. What dost fear?

PELLEGRINO.

Fear? Well, I like that! What do I fear? Nothing. I know not what fear is. Had I been at all susceptible to fear, I should now be sitting quietly and comfortably at home, instead of running about the country, like an old ass, as I am, with a parcel of hare-brained fellows, who seem never so happy as when they are running themselves into danger, and dragging every one else along with them. Fear, indeed! Dost know my wife Catarina?

CAMILLA.

I've not seen much of her, but, as thou know'st,
She's my near neighbour, and I hear her oft.

PELLEGRINO.

And well indeed thou might'st, if not as deaf as Signior

Lot's wife after her transformation. Now my wife Catarina is one that, when her blood is up, would put to flight any fifty of the best soldiers in the guard of his Holiness. Yet do I fear her? Not a bit of it; for I have faced that woman in her angriest moods; and he who dare do that, can't know much of fear. But, methinks, our citizen-soldiers lag shamefully on the road. I tell thee what, good Camilla, that, to my thinking, it would have been wiser both for thee and me to have stayed at home.

CAMILLA.

At home? Alas, what home is left to me?
 What was my home is desolate! and cold
 Its hearthstone now;—its light forever quenched!
 But, thou may'st ask, why leave the peaceful city,
 To mingle needlessly in scenes of strife?
 Because, though I cannot a soldier's part
 Perform against these robbers, may we not,
 Of mine own sex, some prisoner with them find
 To whom I can a woman's service render?
 And though I must no more know happiness,
 'Tis some relief of woe to be the means
 Of happiness to others. (*After a pause.*) What art
 pondering?

PELLEGRINO.

I was thinking, if we should overcome these robbers.

I say *we*, for though thou, who art only a woman, cannot, of course, be expected to fight, and I, though a man, having thee in charge, should not;—what portion of the five thousand scudi will come to each. Let me see. We are in all about two hundred and fifty souls. Now divide five thousand scudi among two hundred and fifty, and how many shall each one receive? Faith, that's a puzzler! Let me figure it out. Five thousand, divided by two hundred and fifty, gives—um, um, um. He's no fool can answer me that. Five thousand by two hundred and fifty—

CAMILLA.

Why, man, 'tis very simple. Twenty each.

PELLEGRINO.

Twenty? Yes. I think thou art nearly right, though thou didst but guess it. Well, twenty scudi, let me tell thee, Signora Camilla, are no bad day's wages for the best of us.

CAMILLA.

No; but those scudi still are to be earned.

PELLEGRINO.

So, indeed, they are. I didn't think o' that. And desperate hard work we may have to earn them too; for Maldonado and his band are a terrible set of fellows; and though numbering perhaps little more than a score,

every one of them is more than a match for any ten of our kind of soldiers, except the Captain, who has proved himself something of a hero before now. Ah me, Camilla, though I've not the least fear in the world, if I had but thought for a moment what work we might have to earn those few scudi, I would have kept myself snugly at home, like the wise man the world has always taken me for. But keep up a stout heart, my good girl;—there's nothing to be gained by being afraid. Hush! I surely heard a footfall! And see; as I'm a living sinner, there's some one coming this way!

[Starts up, and attempts to conceal himself.]

Enter PERELLI.

CAMILLA, *(rising and coming eagerly forward.)*

My brother Luigi! art thou he indeed?

PERELLI.

Thou here, Camilla?

CAMILLA.

Where, O where's Enrica?

PERELLI.

A cruel chance has placed her in the power
Of Maldonado.

CAMILLA.

Saints! and thou hast left her

In that man's hands ?

PERELLI.

But for a little, sister.

CAMILLA.

O not an hour—no, not a single moment
Would I have left a treasure of such value
In that vile wretch's keeping. Brother ! brother !
How couldst thou do so mad a thing as that ?

PERELLI.

Upbraid me not for that I could not help.
When thou shalt hear—

PELLEGRINO, (*coming cautiously forward.*)

Neighbour Perelli, alive ? and here ? I was afraid—
no, hang it ! not afraid !—but I had a fancy that thou
mightst be some one from the camp of the robbers.

PERELLI.

And so indeed it is.

PELLEGRINO.

What meanest thou ?

PERELLI.

That I, indeed, am from the robbers' camp,
And on my way to the Eternal City,
With a demand upon the Count Orsini,

For ransom for his son.

CAMILLA.

Then well encountered,
 For here are those who will the ransom pay
 Ere 'tis demanded ;—but for gold bright steel.
 Look through the ruin. What dost thou see there ?

PERELLI.

A band of armed men, and—can it be ?—
 Orazio Fontana at their head.

PELLEGRINO.

Yes, that's Orazio. He's the head of the band, as thou sayest, and I—I suppose thou thinkest—am the tail, because I and the good Signora Camilla here are to bring up the rear.

Enter ORAZIO and FELICE, through the ruins.

ORAZIO.

Perelli here alone ! What (*to Felice*) say'st thou now ?
 Were not my doubts well founded ?

FELICE.

Prithee list,
 And learn the old man's story. Tell us, sir,
 About thy daughter. Left she Rome with thee ?

PERELLI.

Alas, she did !

FELICE.

And where is now bestowed ?

CAMILLA.

Where she by manly valour must be sought.
Where life—and more than life—are hourly perilled.
She's now a captive to the Brigand Chief.

ORAZIO.

Companion of Ottavio Orsini ?

PERELLI.

In misery, yes.

ORAZIO.

And they left Rome together ?

PERELLI.

Left Rome together ? Dost thou mean Enrica,
And one of the Orsini ? My pure child,
And one of that bad race, whose breath would blight
All virgin purity o'er which it passed ?
Whose touch would be pollution ? Shame, young man,
To think that possible !

ORAZIO.

Thy pardon, sir.

I see and own my fault. But disappointment,
In what had been my earliest, dearest hope,

ORAZIO.

And for this
Thou askest nothing but to be forgiven?

GIUSEPPE.

Unless it please the goodness of His Holiness
Some slight return to make a poor man, sir,
For such a service rendered to the state.

ORAZIO.

And that he will, no doubt. But ere thou goest
To shrift, I mean thou shalt perform thy penance,
By guiding us unto this wild beast's lair.
I ask no pledge for thy fidelity,
For I'll make sure of that. (*To FELICE.*) Here, place
this man

Between two of our troop—two of the stoutest,
And bid them, should he seemed disposed to play
A double part, to slay him on the instant.
Friends, let us on. A cry from the Abruzzi
Thrills to my heart! 'Tis poor Enrica calls.
O haste we then to her deliverance!

[Exit hurriedly through the ruin, followed by the others.]

A C T V.

SCENE I.

A cave in the Abruzzi, richly but rudely furnished, and brilliantly lighted. ENRICA, splendidly attired, reclining upon a couch.

ENRICA, (*rising and coming forward.*)

I LOOK in wonder much, but more in fear,
 Upon these gorgeous robes and dazzling gems,
 That better would beseem a crowned queen
 Than the poor daughter of an humble sculptor,
 And ask myself, Why am I thus arrayed
 If not for sacrifice? But O he cannot—
 Indeed he cannot mean to keep his threat!
 He will not; nay, he dare not! I his queen?
His queen! Companion of his lawless riot;
 The sharer of the spoils that have been won
 By fraud or blood? My brain reels at the thought!
 My heart is lead! and in my veins the current
 Of life is turned to ice! O blessed saints!
 Protect me from the gross, unhallowed love
 Of this bold man, by me more to be dreaded
 Than his worst hate; and aid my father's steps
 To make a quick return.

[*A mandolin is heard*

The gentle boy,
Whom Maldona gave me for my page,
Doth thus apprise me of his near approach.

SONG.—GIAN-ANGELO.

O'er life's rugged waste have I wandered alone,
Till heart-sore and weary I sink to the ground,
The flint for my couch, and my pillow a stone,
And darkness above me, and tempest around.

Nor more with my fate can I strive, since the light
Hope shed on my pathway forever is gone,
And shrine of my pilgrimage lost to my sight;
While morning comes not, and the tempest raves on!

Enter GIAN-ANGELO.

ENRICA.

Thy song is sad, my friend.

GIAN-ANGELO.

The fitter, then,
To be the echo of my heart's deep wail,
For that is sad indeed!

ENRICA.

Thou dost not love
The life thou leadest here?

GIAN-ANGELO.

Love it! Alas,
Could any love a life with wretches who
Make sport of deeds that fiends would shudder at?

ENRICA.

Why then remain among them ?

GIAN-ANGELO.

For the sake

Of one who is to me my world, my all ;
Round whom the tendrils of my heart are twined
So firmly that shall death alone unclasp them ;
Whose present weal and future happiness
Than my salvation only are only less dear.

ENRICA.

Thou mean'st this Robber Chief ?

GIAN-ANGELO.

My *Brother*, lady.

The only living thing within whose breast
One spark of love still burns for poor Gian-Ángelo.
I blame thee not for thy harsh thought of him,
For thou hast known him only as the world
Has known, and judgest him as doth the world.
Yet of the good he more deserves the pity
Than hate or anger. Poor, unhappy Ugo !

ENRICA.

I pity him, as I do pity all
Who weakly yield the throne, which sovereign Reason
Should keep possession of, to the vile mob

Of passions that infest the human heart,
 And wage incessant war 'gainst Truth and Right.
 We'll say thy brother has been wronged.

GIAN-ANGELO.

Most foully.

ENRICA.

But that admitted, can it right the wrong
 He may have suffered at the hands of one,
 To put the torch unto the poor man's roof?
 Destroy his crops, and sow his fields with salt?
 And 'mong the peaceful, unoffending many
 To scatter desolation? But I see
 The subject pains thee, and no further now
 Will we pursue it. Tell me of thyself.
 Thou can'st not here at first of thine own will?
 Thou wast entrapped? inveigled? brought by force?
 And, being here, the bond of love has aided
 Thy captors to detain thee?

GIAN-ANGELO.

Nay, not so.

Of mine own will I came, and when I will
 Am free to go. My story soon is told.
 Will't please thee hear it?

When my brother, for
 Some deed which rigid law makes crime, was forced
 To take to the Campagna, my poor mother,

Whose love was all a mother's, bowed her head
In mute despair, and lifted it no more ;
And when she died, with grief for her, and shame
For his first-börn, the spirit of my father
Was crushed, and he died too. I, who am yet
Scarce half-grown man, was then a little child—
A weak, dependent child—whose only home
Was such as Christian charity provides
For the unfortunate. It was not all
My former one had been ; for, ah ! no mother
Soothed to forgetfulness my little griefs,
Or dried the tears upon my cheeks with kisses,
Or met my wishes ere I gave them words ;
Yet to the friendless 'twas a pleasant refuge
From the world's buffetings. While here I learned
How terrible the lot of the transgressors,
Who, loathsome with the leprosy of sin,
Defiant of God's power, presumptuously
Rush to the judgment-seat of the Most Holy !
Then came the thought of Ugo. Could I leave
The brother in whose bosom I had lain,
I cannot tell how oft, to tread unwarned
The path that leads to everlasting death ?
I sought him out ; and strove with prayers and tears
To win him back to virtue and to peace.

ENRICA.

And dost thou hope that yet thou shalt succeed ?

GIAN-ANGELO.

O, Lady, did I not my heart would break !
 Yes, I *do* hope. The harvest may be late ;
 But who that casts his seed into the ground
 Hopes not one day to see the ripened corn ?
 But though at first 'twas feeble, hope has grown
 Now into strength, since thy all-powerful beauty
 Has come in aid of my poor efforts.

ENRICA.

Thou

Dost speak in riddles.

GIAN-ANGELO.

Ugo loves thee, lady.

ENRICA.

Loves me ?

GIAN-ANGELO.

Be not offended at my words ;
 But thou must know that none could look on thee
 And love thee not, for beauty all must love.
 Then if he loves thee, love, which hath so oft
 The flame of discord kindled, and the bond
 Of brotherhood destroyed, as flax is by
 The touch of fire, at last may prove for good
 Not less omnipotent than it has been
 For evil ; and to human love shall heaven
 Be yet indebted for a soul reclaimed.

ENRICA.

A dream, poor boy, a dream—bright but unreal!
Which when thou wak'st will vanish. With thy prayers
Mine would I join; to them would add my tears,
Could they but aid thee in thy loving efforts
To save thy brother. But than prayers and tears
More can I never give; and should he love me—
Which heaven forbend!—since love can be alone
With love repaid, and I with all have parted
My heart once owned—that were to both an evil
Scarce less than direst hate to be deplored.

GIAN-ANGELO.

O say not so. The love of beauty must
More hideous make deformity; of goodness,
More odious vice. My brother sees in thee
Unequalled beauty with exalted goodness
United, and will hence regard with loathing
What he hath looked upon complacently,
Or with indifference, and from the work,
That wins his admiration, will lift up
His soul to Him who fashioned it so fair—
In whom alone in full perfection dwell
All beauty and all goodness—and that gaze
Will so inflame his heart with love of Heaven,
That he will spurn the world, which now he finds
So tempting to the eye of sense. Thou smil'st.

ENRICA.

In admiration of thy hopeful spirit.
But hush! he's here.

*Enter MALDONADO. He motions GIAN-ANGELO away, who retires up,
but does not leave the cave.*

MALDONADO.

O what a thing is beauty!
Which, like the sun of our most lovely clime,
A glory sheds on all it smiles upon,
Filling the eye, the heart, the soul of man
With light and love and joy! The cloud is passed
That late thy brightness shrouded, and thou now
In all thy native radiance dost appear,
And look'st the queen thou art.

ENRICA.

I pray thee, sir,
Remember thou art in a maiden's chamber,
And at an hour untimely. Briefly, then,
Possess me with the purpose of thy visit,
And kindly leave me to myself.

MALDONADO.

My purpose?
What can it be, but at the shrine of beauty
To pay the vows that my devotion prompts?
Nay, look not on me with that brow of scorn,

For I do love thee with a strong heart's love ;
 And what this morn was but a feeble spark
 Now burns a conflagration !

ENRICA.

Thou art merry !

MALDONADO.

Ay, in good sooth. And who would not be merry
 With heaven in view ? which thus I make mine own !
[Attempts to clasp her.

ENRICA, (*eluding him.*)

Forbear ! forbear ! Thou canst not be so base
 As take advantage of my helplessness ?
 There is no heart, however dead in sin,
 That 'mid its ashes doth not keep alive
 One spark of virtue ;—scarce among the vile
 Can one be found who knows no sense of honour ;
 And thou art bound by honour to respect
 The pledge thou gav'st my father.

MALDONADO.

Gave thy father ?

ENRICA.

That I—were he successful in his mission—
 Should be, unharmed, with him restored to freedom.

MALDONADO.

Yes, such I gave, when I believed thee but
 A feeble stripling, for the life unfit
 We free companions lead, not the brave woman
 Who in her regal beauty stands before me.
 No man, how nice soe'er his sense of honour,
 In conscience could be bound by such a pledge.

ENRICA.

Then by the love which thou didst bear thy mother,
 Whose honest name is to thy heart a spell
 Must purest memories waken, I conjure thee,
 That with indignity thou treat me not.

MALDONADO.

Indignity? thou silly maid! Not I.
 Unless it be indignity to make thee
 My heart's sole empress, and the sharer of
 A power that monarchs would be proud to wield.
 Then throw aside a coyness which so ill
 Becometh thee, and give me love for love.

[Attempts to seize her.]

ENRICA, (*drawing a stiletto from her bosom.*)

Approach me not! I would not by this hand
 Blood should be shed, or an immortal soul
 Sent unprepared to its account;—but mark me!
 At every cost I will defend mine honour.

MALDONADO, (*laughing derisively.*)

What! wouldst thou fright me with that bauble, child,
In such a hand as thine? Why, I have seen
A dozen naked blades before me brandished
By stalwart men, and laughed at them. Nay, nay;
Put it aside.

[*As he approaches to take it from her, GIAN-ANGELO, who
has come forward unperceived, steps before him.*]

Why cam'st thou here?

GIAN-ANGELO.

To save

My brother from commission of a wrong
He would repent.

MALDONADO.

Away! thou art too bold.

ENRICA.

O do not, do not leave me.

GIAN-ANGELO.

Never, lady,

'Till Ugo Maldonado shall regain
That mastery o'er himself which now is lost.

MALDONADO.

Thou dost forget thyself.

GIAN-ANGELO.

No, Ugo, no.

I am thy brother—much thy younger brother,—
And owe to thee a duty hardly less
Than, were he living, might our father claim ;
And by that very duty am I urged
To save thee from this evil.

MALDONADO.

Hence, I say !

And meddle not with that may breed thee danger.

ENRICA.

Obey him not, brave boy, obey him not,
If thou wouldst win the blessing of the helpless.

[Shouts and firing without.]

GIACOMO, (*entering hurriedly.*)

We are betrayed ! Some villain of the band
Hath to our enemies made known the passage
That, by the bed of the exhausted torrent,
Leads to the camp, and through it is a tide
Of armed men now pouring, that must soon
O'erwhelm us, if not instantly opposed.

ENRICA.

O Heaven ! I thank thee for this timely respite !

MALDONADO.

Thou nam'st it rightly. 'Tis a respite only;
 Not a full pardon. I'll return anon,
 And claim the penalty that's due thy crime
 'Gainst love's true sovereignty. On, Giacomo!

[*Exeunt MALDONADO and GIACO.*]

ENRICA, (*falling on the neck of GIAN-ANGELO.*)

My generous, brave preserver!

GIAN-ANGELO.

I have saved

Thank Heaven for that! my brother for the present.

[*Scene closes.*]



SCENE II.

A mountain pass. Robbers enter, closely followed by citizens. A skirmish. Robbers are discomfited and fly, pursued by citizens.



SCENE III.

The same as Act Third, dimly lighted by the moon. Enter GIUSEPPE.

GIUSEPPE.

I yet am safe; though danger hems me round
 So closely that I know not where to turn,
 Or whom to seek as friends. The citizens
 I feel despise me for my treachery,

And narrowly they watch my every movement,
Though valiantly I seem to fight for them ;
And if I have been missed, destruction sure
Will light upon me from the robbers' hands.
O for a place of refuge, 'till the storm
Of this hour's strife is o'er.

Enter GIACOMO.

GIACOMO.

Thou dog! But no.
I will not wrong a faithful brute by likening
To him so vile a thing as thou. Thou viper!
Wouldst sting the heart that warmed thee into life!
Down to the dust, that every honest foot
May tread upon thee!

GIUSEPPE.

Hear me, Giacomo.

GIACOMO.

I have no time to listen ;—hear thou this,
And let thy death-groan answer.

[Fires and exit.]

GIUSEPPE.

Dead. O heaven!

[Staggering off mortally wounded.]

[*Enter ORAZIO and MALDONADO, fighting furiously. MALDONADO'S sword is broken, and, being overcome, ORAZIO is about to slay him, when GIAN-ANGELO rushes between them, and receives ORAZIO'S sword in his breast. CITIZENS enter on the back of the scene with torches.*

MALDONADO.

Unhappy boy! what hast thou done?

GIAN-ANGELO, (*falling into his arms.*)

Saved thee!

MALDONADO, (*bitterly.*)

Yes, from a soldier's for a felon's death.

GIAN-ANGELO.

What does it matter, brother, how we die?
 The pangs the body suffers soon are o'er,
 Let death come as it may. But the soul's anguish—
 When dying through all time, and, when time ends,
 Throughout a measureless eternity—
 O, 'tis a thought the stoutest to appal!
 And I from that would save thee. Dearest Ugo,
 Our gentle, loving mother is in heaven;
 Our father too—that good old man! is there;
 And I, the little brother that thou didst
 In other days so fondle, haste to join them.
 What shall I tell them when they ask of thee?
 May I not say, that, in the few brief hours

Between thy capture and thy execution ;—
 Shrink not ;—the shame's not in the death, but that
 By which the death is merited ;—thou didst,
 By true repentance of thy many crimes,
 Obtain God's pardon, and they yet shall see
 Their well-beloved son among the blest ?

MALDONADO.

O gentle, loving, noble-hearted brother !
 For thy dear sake, will I the heaven now lost
 Strive to win back. And if sincere repentance
 Can reconcile to me offended Justice,
 We yet shall meet where there is no more death.

GIAN-ANGELO.

Kiss me, my brother. (*Kisses him.*) I am happy now.
[Dies.

ORAZIO, (*motioning some CITIZENS forward.*)

Take with all tenderness the soulless form
 Of this poor youth, and bear it hence to Rome,
 Where it shall rest among the sainted dead.
 And place the prisoner in your midst. But while
 Ye guard him with the utmost vigilance,
 Let not an eye exult at his misfortune,
 Nor one rude word disturb the sacred grief
 Now brooding o'er his heart.

[*Exeunt CITIZENS with MALDONADO and the body of*

GIAN-ANGELO.

*Enter PERELLI with ENRICA, followed by FELICE, CAMILLA, PELLEGRINO
and others.*

ENRICA.

Orazio!

ORAZIO, (*springing to meet her.*)

Enrica! do I fold thee once again
To this fond heart! This, this is joy indeed!

ENRICA.

A joy that has been purchased with much pain.

PERELLI.

That which is hardest earned is highest prized.
If men could gather pearls from every brook,
Who would regard them? 'Tis the toil they cost
That gives them value. Ye have earned your joy;
And if the blessing of a happy father
Can make it lasting, ye shall have it long.

[ORAZIO and ENRICA bend before PERELLI for his blessing.]

CURTAIN FALLS.

Dolores :—a Tragedy.

CHARACTERS.



THE STRANGER.

DON LUIS DE VIVERO.

COUNT FERDINAND DEL HOYO.

DIEGO SANCHEZ.

SEBASTIAN DIAZ.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

FIRST INQUISITOR.

SECOND INQUISITOR.

MIGUEL.

LOPE.

DONNA ANGUSTIA DEL HOYO.

LEANDRA.

DOLORES.

JUANA.

PRIESTS, FAMILIARS, &c.

SCENE.—*Spain, partly in the country and partly in Madrid.*

TIME.—*Middle of the Sixteenth Century.*

D O L O R E S.

A C T I.

SCENE I.

A large room in the house of DIEGO SANCHEZ. DIEGO is sitting apart, in a musing mood, while LEANDRA is preparing supper.

DIEGO, (*rising and coming forward.*)

THAT girl not yet returned ?

LEANDRA, (*continuing her work.*)

Not yet, not yet.

DIEGO.

I like it not, good wife, that, day by day,
Thou dost permit these idle wanderings,
Instead of teaching her the thrifty ways
Of her old mother.

LEANDRA.

I permit them not.
She ever was a wayward thing, but late
Her waywardness has grown beyond control,

And to my frequent chidings, and my prayers,
 Hath she become as deaf as the fierce storms
 That mock the shepherds' cries among our mountains.
 I do not know the one whom she takes after.
 Thy disposition hath she not, nor mine.

DIEGO.

Indeed she is but little like to either
 In mind or person. In thy fairest days—
 And in thy time there were not many fairer—
 Thy loveliness would scarce compare with hers.
 And, though my temper is not of the best,
 To the wild gusts of passion, which so oft
 Transform her beauty into hideousness,
 I ne'er was subject. A strange fear at times
 Doth seize me; that some demon, envious
 Of our past happiness, is now at work
 To wound our hearts through her that was their joy.

LEANDRA, (*joining him.*)

O think not that. We foolishly, perhaps—
 It may be sinfully—her early fondness
 For idle ballads and romancers' tales
 Did sanction by our silence, and her head
 Have they with silly fancies filled. But time
 Will scatter them before she counts my years.
 And when she shall become Sebastian's wife,—

DIEGO.

Sebastian's wife I fear she never will be ;
 For I have seen with pain the studied coldness—
 The scarce concealed dislike—wherewith of late
 Receives she his attentions. And, though he
 So far hath borne all patiently, and may
 Bear for awhile, he is not one, I trow,
 To be the slave of woman's caprice long ;
 While dozens are there who for loss of her
 Right gladly would console him. The one hope,
 Which I have cherished from her infancy—
 By union of our children, in mine age
 To bind to me the friend of early days—
 Her folly or her madness will destroy ;
 And I at last shall be denied the comfort
 Of knowing, when I am called hence, I leave
 My child in guardianship of one whose power
 Is to protect her equal to his will.

LEANDRA.

Too seriously thou think'st of this. But come ;
 Thou must be hungry, and thy supper waits.

DIEGO.

I weary am, not hungry. Let me yet
 Rest for a moment ere I eat.

[A pause.

My thoughts

Have been most sad to-day, for all last night
 Dreamed I of my dead brother.

LEANDRA.

Poor Hernando!

DIEGO.

'Tis very strange, yet do I never dream
 Of him that evil does not follow.

[*A pause.*

We—

As brothers will, unhappily, at times—
 Had quarrelled, nor were reconciled before
 He left for the last time our father's house—
 This house, where thou and I have dwelt for years—
 And went to sea, where he was lost.

[*Another pause.*

Dost think

There can be truth in what was told us once,
 That friends and nearest kindred, banished from
 God's presence, oft—to gratify their malice
 Against the Judge by whose impartial justice
 They are condemned to everlasting woe—
 Become our souls' worst enemies, and seek,
 By subtlest means, to lure us to our ruin?

LEANDRA.

I do not know. But, true or false, what is't
 To thee or me?

DIEGO.

O Heaven! if my poor brother,
Whom—seldom though we did agree—I loved
With all my heart, should be—I cannot utter
The horrid thought that, since I woke this morn,
Has been a living serpent in my brain,
Stinging to madness!

It is almost night.

Bid some one seek Dolores.

LEANDRA, (*looking out.*)

Here's Sebastian.

Him will I send upon thine errand, and
Go thou to supper.

[*Ex't* LEANDRA.

DIEGO.

It is weak! 'tis wrong!

To let the memory of a nightly fancy—
The shadow of a thing impalpable—
Weigh down my spirit like some real grief,
Some positive misfortune, which to bear
Would task my manliness, and yet, when borne
With patience, gives such dignity to sorrow.
What can it bode? To me or mine some evil?
That question time alone can answer. Well,
To time will I then leave it; and now seek
Forgetfulness alike of dream and fears.

[*Walks up to the table and sits down.*

SCENE II.

A shaded lane. Enter LEANDRA and SEBASTIAN.

SEBASTIAN.

I will go seek her, since it is thy wish,
Though well I know the herdsman Pedro's presence
Would be than mine more welcome.

LEANDRA.

Foolish boy !

Dost think it easy from a maiden's manner
To guess her inclinations ? She is oft
Most fond when seeming most indifferent ;
And even will flout and jeer when, did she yield
To its warm pleadings, she would not withhold
Confession of the love that fills her heart.
I've been a girl myself, and know the humours
By which her actions—not her heart—are governed.
In words Dolores may not thank thee for
Thy pains in seeking her ; but, credit me,
She will not be ungrateful.

SEBASTIAN.

I would go
A barefoot journey o'er the Pyrenees,

To win one glance of kindness from those eyes
That have of late flashed only scorn upon me.

LEANDRA.

Go, then ; and tell me when thou dost return,
What's been thy meed.

[*Exit* SEBASTIAN.

O could I but be sure

Dolores loved thee as thy worth deserves ;
Or would repay thy love with half its sum ;
Her future weal would give me little care.
But her uncertain humours—wildly gay,
Morose, or melancholy without cause—
And lonely wanderings among the hills
For hours and hours, force the conviction on me,
That if she love—and love or witchcraft only
Could change her thus—her love is not for thee.

[*Returns, and exit.*



SCENE III.

A mountainous country. DOLORES stands upon a height, looking earnestly for something in the distance. STRANGER appears below.

STRANGER.

Thou beauteous bird ! that from thy airy perch
Wouldst through the distance send thy piercing gaze,
Yet canst not see the serpent at thy feet,

'Tis now my duty to the lord I serve
 To tempt thee to thy ruin, by the love
 Which thou hast long in secret cherished, and
 The hope thou hugg'st unwitting to thy heart—
 A hope that, realized—and if I fail not,
 It realized shall be—must prove thy curse ;—
 And not alone thy curse, but curse of all
 Whose fate or happiness is linked with thine ;—
 Come to my lure, that I may earn the joy
 Which only to the damned can be known
 When wreck is made of mortal hope and faith,
 And an immortal spirit has been brought
 To share an immortality of woe.

[*Disappears.*

DOLORES, with an air of disappointment, descends and comes forward.

DOLORES.

Another day, another precious day,
 Is added to the many I have squandered,
 In watching, from yon mountain's rocky brow,
 The travellers that to and fro are passing
 Along the narrow road that skirts its base,
 To catch a glimpse, or but the shadow see
 Of the one glorious form that hath become
 The sum and centre of my universe.
 But all in vain ! and darkness thick and chill
 Is gathering round the earth, and now must I,

In body faint and weary, and in spirit
 Prostrate and hopeless, back to my dull home!
 O what a thoughtless prodigal am I,
 To lavish all my wealth of love on one;—
 To cast my heart before a stranger's feet
 For him to trample on or spurn! And yet
 I do not wish—I would not have it back,
 To live in cold indifference, for all
 The lands o'er which, to-day, my longing eyes
 Have wandered in their bootless search for him.
 For oh, there is in love, when unrequited
 And unsuspected by its object, such
 Unfathomable joy, that other bliss
 Is but a shallow brook to this deep sea!
 Then what an ocean of delight is love
 That is with love repaid? My yearning soul,
 When shall thy vast desires be satisfied?

STRANGER *reappears.*

STRANGER, (*aside.*)

A glorious humour for my purpose this.

DOLORES.

A stranger here?

STRANGER.

A charming eve, fair lady,
 To watch the melting of the golden clouds,

Th' affluent sun hath scattered o'er the west,
 Into the dreamy twilight, and to breathe
 The air of these old hills, which gives new life
 Even to my jaded frame.

DOLORES.

The eve, indeed,
 Is lovely, and the air invigorating.
 So far thy words are sooth. But 'tis, methinks,
 A scoff, not courtesy, for one to call
 A peasant maid by the proud name of *lady*

STRANGER.

And yet the name of lady is the one
 Best fits thy bearing. Peasant-born thou may'st be,
 And peasant-bred, but not of peasant mind ;
 Nor will thy destiny—unless th' experience
 Of threescore years shall be at fault—be that
 Thy childhood promised.

DOLORES.

Canst thou read the future ?

STRANGER.

To little purpose hath he known the past
 Who could not from the present of the future
 Some judgment form. In every thing are we—
 The accident of birth alone excepted—
 Just what we make ourselves. The hind who tills

Yon fields, would he but give his spirit wing,
 Might rise with ease above the sordid earth,
 Whereof—for want of will—he is a part.
 Then who could fail to tell, from what he is,
 What he shall be? A groveller until death.

DOLORS.

We are the slaves of circumstance, and not
 Alone of our own wills. From the deep vale,
 Or barren plain, where I must dwell, would I,
 If doing were as easy as to will,
 Ascend the mountain-heights of wealth and fame,
 And twine upon my brow the wreath of power.
 And yet, with all my soaring spirit, I—
 The peasant-born—shall peasant live and die.

STRANGER.

Yes, if thou wilt not act, but only wish.
 They can alone expect the gods to aid them
 Who first to their own work give their own strength.
 But didst thou see thy way to fortune clear—
 Fame is her breath, and Power her minister,
 The first possessed makes both the others thine—
 Would not some tie of kin, some early love
 For one by whom the rosy path of youth
 With thee has trodden been, thy step restrain,
 And make thee falter in thy upward path?

DOLORES.

The tie of kin?—the tie of early love?
 To one who feels her birth her greatest curse?
 Who never yet had love for thing content
 To crawl through life the worm it was at first?
 The spider's thread, that by a breath is broken,
 Would be a cable to the tie that binds
 This heart to kin or lover. From my path
 Remove the barrier that now impedes
 My eager step, and thou shalt see how strong
 The ties that bind me here.

STRANGER.

Perhaps, if free
 To choose thy path, thou wouldst to Court?

DOLORES.

To Court!
 O who would not? What is there beautiful,
 Or great, or noble, that is not at Court?
 O yes, I would to Court.

STRANGER.

Where thou wouldst shine
 Most bright among the brightest!

DOLORES.

Where, at least,
 Those should I find to whom I could look up

With love or admiration. Not forever,
 With all my pride—and very proud am I—
 Would I beneath me see my life-companions;
 And when I, weary of myself, would fain
 Have some strong heart to turn on which to lean.

STRANGER.

Thine did I fancy one of those brave spirits
 Would ask no outer aid for its support;—
 But self-dependent live.

DOLORES.

I do not ask
 From others more than sympathy, or love.

STRANGER.

Love is a want thou surely canst not know.
 Even here thou hast had lovers?

DOLORES.

Lovers? yes,
 If such thou callest men who coolly count
 All the advantages to be derived
 From marriage with the daughter of a man
 Who, in his little world, hath much importance,
 Because of some small wealth; and of a woman
 Who, 'mong the housewives of her neighbourhood,
 Hath scarce an equal;—such have I in plenty.

STRANGER.

And none of all to love thee for thyself?

DOLORES.

Perhaps there may be one, who, ere he knew
The worth of land and flocks, my playmate was,
And loved me then, and loves me still, because
His love has grown a habit of the mind,
Not passion of the heart.

STRANGER.

And lov'st thou him?

DOLORES.

For what? He knows not me more than the herd.
And to be loved, yet not appreciated,
Can win from me nor love nor gratitude.

STRANGER.

What wouldst thou do for him would take thee hence?

DOLORES.

What could I do, but, for the service rendered,
Give heartiest thanks? If they could satisfy,
Most largely should he find himself rewarded.

STRANGER.

Wouldst go with me?

DOLORES.

A stranger?

STRANGER.

Not a stranger.

DOLORES.

Have we then met before ?

STRANGER.

No. Yet are we
Not strangers.

DOLORES.

That doth seem a contradiction.

STRANGER.

Thou art the daughter of Diego Sanchez ?

DOLORES.

His only child.

STRANGER.

Thy father had a brother ?

DOLORES.

Who went to sea, and died ere I was born.

STRANGER.

Who went to sea indeed, but did not die.
Nay lived, and lived to gather untold treasures ;
To gain a name among his country's nobles ;
And win a place in favour of his sovereign

Scarce second to the one held by the Favourite,
Don Luis de Vivero.

DOLORES.

Know'st thou him ?

STRANGER.

Don Luis ? Yes. I know him as the elm
Knows the green vine that clasps it in its tendrils.
For he of living things is that alone
Whose love has twined itself about my heart.
Hast ever seen Don Luis ?

DOLORES.

Oft—by chance.

Within a league an ancient castle stands—
A stern old pile, that has for many an age
Stood all unscathèd the close siege of time—
Which from his fathers hath to him descended.
This has he oft-times visited of late ;
And as his road lies near, I cannot choose,
When here I roam in search of solitude,
But sometimes see him in his journeyings.

STRANGER.

But ye have never met ?

DOLORES.

No ; never met.

STRANGER.

And knows he nought of thee ?

D O L O R E S .

No more than doth
The glorious sun know of the humblest flower
That lives but in his light.

STRANGER.

Wouldst have him know thee ?

D O L O R E S .

O yes !—Yet to what end ?

STRANGER.

That he might love thee ?

D O L O R E S .

Don Luis love the peasant maid Dolores ?
'Tis cruel thus to mock my lowliness.

STRANGER.

Thy lowliness may yet be raised to give
New honours even to his princely house.
Thou look'st thy disbelief in my prediction.
To prove its truth go with me.

D O L O R E S .

Who art thou,
Wouldst have me rush on fate with bandaged eyes ?

STRANGER.

Hernando Sanchez.

DOLORES.

Thou my uncle ?

STRANGER.

Yes.

DOLORES.

O how delighted will my father be,
To find him living he hath mourned as dead.

STRANGER.

Dead have I been to him these many years,
And shall be ever ; and must be to all
Who knew Hernando Sanchez. To the world
Henceforth am I Don Rafael de Chacon,
And Duke of Yucatan. Wilt be my daughter ?
Go with me to the brilliant Court, where wealth,
Like the rich setting of a priceless gem,
Will draw all eyes upon thy matchless beauty,
Which, like the diamond in the rough, might else
Be passed unheeded ?

DOLORES.

But my parents ?

STRANGER.

They

Are well content in their obscurity ;

And we will leave them there. The egg that holds
The future eagle may, by chance, be dropped
Into the nest of meaner bird, by which
'Tis quickened into life. Wouldst therefore have
The eaglet, when it upward mounts, to mingle
With its true kindred in the fields of air,
Bear with it those poor, timid things that shared—
Neither through love nor choice, but misdirection—
With it their earth-built home? But hark!

SEBASTIAN, (*without.*)

Dolores!

STRANGER.

Thou'rt called. Another moment's hesitation,
And all the wealth thy uncle has to give;
And all the admiration due thy beauty;
The love, too, of Don Luis—more than these—
Are lost to thee forever.

DOLORS.

Yet—

SEBASTIAN, (*without.*)

Dolores!

STRANGER.

Decide, and quick.

D O L O R E S, (*giving her hand.*)

I have decided. Haste,
And take me hence;—we have no time to waste.

[*Enter SEBASTIAN hurriedly, as they go off.*

SEBASTIAN.

Stay, stay, Dolores! She, alas, is gone!
Fled with a stranger! and the light that shone
Within my breast has the rude breath of Fate
Blown sudden out, and dark and desolate
My world has now become! And yet I grieve
Less for myself than those whom she doth leave,
In their old age, to wish her dead, whom they
Would scarce to God have given but yesterday!

[*Walks mournfully back, and exit.*

A C T I I .

S C E N E I .

A hall in the Palace of DON LUIS. MIGUEL and LOPE meeting.

MIGUEL.

WELL met, fellow servant.

LOPE.

What, Miguel, returned at last? I thought thee off to the New World, with the rest of our young gallants, who have more wit than gold, and more courage than brains, and never expected to see thee again, but as the owner of a gold mine, or a pearl fishery, or some such trifle, and the husband of an Indian princeess at the least. But where, to speak seriously, hast thou been these two months past?

MIGUEL.

On a fool's errand.

LOPE.

No doubt o' that, if the errand was thine own. But what didst bring home with thee?

MIGUEL.

Disappointment.

LOPE.

Come, man, don't be so chary of thy words. Let's have thy story.

MIGUEL.

Story? Faith, I've no story to tell. I've only been on a search through Andalusia for the Donna Augustia, daughter of the good old Count del Hoyo, whose marriage with our master was so unfortunately prevented, by the untimely death of her father. But she has strangely disappeared from among her friends, who could tell me nothing about her, nor has she left one word of farewell or explanation for the comfort of her betrothed, whom I have just left in a state bordering on despair.

LOPE.

And yet, I venture to say, he'll not break his heart for all that.

MIGUEL.

What dost thou mean?

LOPE.

That there's a lady, not a hundred miles from the Court at this minute, who is very likely to console him for the loss of his sweetheart.

MIGUEL.

Indeed?

LOPE.

A stranger has appeared among us in thine absence who has quite turned the heads of king and courtiers. A person of such immense wealth that the very pots and pans in his kitchen are of pure gold, and the cups he drinks out of are entirely of precious stones. But what is considered the greatest treasure in his possession, is his daughter, a creature of most wonderful beauty, who, 'tis whispered in the best informed circles, is likely to become the wife of our master, Don Luis.

MIGUEL.

O, impossible! But who is this stranger?

LOPE.

Who is he? is a question easier asked than answered. Some say he is the veritable Prester John, and others the Devil himself. But this is the story he tells. He is a certain Don Rafael de Chacon, the last of a once powerful family, who left Spain many years ago, in search of adventures, and for the improvement of his fortunes; and who, after wandering over Europe, and visiting Africa once or twice, embarked in a vessel for the New World, where, while fighting under the banner of the Conqueror of Mexico, he was instrumental in saving the life of a great king, who, in reward for the service rendered, put him in possession of the immense treasures he had hidden upon the arrival of the Europeans, and gave him, besides, his only daughter in marriage,

who became in time the mother of the beautiful girl that has turned the heads of all our nobles, young and old. On his return to his native land, he made some magnificent presents to the king, who thereupon restored him a portion of the estates of his family, which had escheated to the crown, and gave him in addition the title of Duke of Yucatan; and now, as a further mark of his royal regard, is anxious to bring about a marriage between the present Favourite, our excellent master, and the beautiful Donna Dolores.

MIGUEL.

Hush, here comes Don Luis.

Enter DON LUIS.

DON LUIS, (*giving LOPE a letter.*)

This to the Duke of Yucatan. In person
Will I call for the answer. (*Exit LOPE.*) Nothing heard
Of young Count Ferdinand?

MIGUEL.

Nothing, my lord,
But what was known before I took this journey.
The castles and estates pledged by his father
Are unredeemed, and whether he yet lives
To claim them, no one knows.

DON LUIS.

Poor Ferdinand!

Another broken link in friendship's chain!
 Go, order out my horses. I will forth
 Beyond the walls, to breathe awhile in freedom.

[*Exit* MIGUEL.

'Tis done. What I would not to please my king,
 The sting of wounded pride, and just resentment
 Of slighted love, have forced me into doing;
 And thus my fate is sealed. Angustia!
 Who didst beneath an angel's form conceal
 A cold, unloving heart! the time may be
 When him thou hast so cruelly deserted—
 Thine early friend, the lover of thy youth—
 Thou wilt regret in bitterness of spirit.
 When sorrow comes upon thee, and on all—
 Even on the happiest—will sorrow come,
 Thou mayst the shelter of a true heart need,
 And love's sustaining power, and find them not.
 How must all memory of the happy past
 Have from thy mind been blotted, ere thou couldst
 Throw from thee, with such careless hand, th' affection
 Had been thy stay through life. And will the proud,
 Imperious Dolores, at whose feet
 The lordliest of the lordly hourly kneel
 In mute devotion, what is by another
 With scorn rejected, and to her now coldly
 Is offered, deign accept? Pray Heaven she will not.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

*An apartment in the Palace of DON RAFAEL. Enter the STRANGER
as DON RAFAEL, leading in DONNA ANGUSTIA.*

DON RAFAEL.

Most happy shall I ever deem the chance
That brought the daughter of my earliest friend
Unto my door, which, were it barred to all
The world beside, would open of itself
To give her welcome. But art thou alone?

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

Alone indeed! for scarce in all the world
Have I a friend.

DON RAFAEL.

Forget not that I live.

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

Thy pardon, noble sir, I did not mean
To cast a doubt upon thy generous friendship.
But death, and man's inconstancy, of late
So fast have thinned the ranks of those whom love
Once drew around me, that I find it hard,
At times, to name a friend.

DON RAFAEL.

Then, if so poor

In friends, in fortune thou canst not be rich,
For they too oft are but the shadows cast
By Fortune walking in the sun. When gone
The substance, disappear the shadows too.

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

Alas, my story does that truth too well
Exemplify! If thee it would not tire,
I will relate it, for to the full heart
To tell its sorrows o'er is some relief,
Though such it seem not.

As thou mayst remember,
My father was thought rich; and rich he was,
Until the gold and gems adventurers brought
From that far world, which the bold Genoese
Had won in battling with the powers of ocean,
Made what was wealth before seem poverty;
When to the madness of the time he yielded;
And, to obtain the money that was needed,
To purchase ships, and properly to man them,
For the rash enterprise, which was to add
A something more to that which was enough
Already, put his castles and his lands
In pawn, and, dying, left them unredeemed.

DON RAFAEL.

Most cruel and unjust! How dared he risk,
Upon an undertaking so uncertain,

The fortune that was only his in trust,—
 For parents are but stewards for their children,—
 And cast a young and helpless creature forth
 Upon the never slumbering sea of life,
 To float or be submerged?

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

O blame not him!

He did not think to leave me unprotected,
 Or unprovided, who was then betrothed
 To one in fortune high, but not more high
 In fortune than in honour.

DON RAFAEL.

Art thou wed?

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

To misery ;—yes.

DON RAFAEL.

• A widow, and so young?

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

My lord, I am no widow.

DON RAFAEL.

Proved he false

Whose troth to thee was plighted?

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

I know not.

About the time of my poor father's death,

Now two years past, was he called to the court,
 And placed in near attendance on the king,
 Whose favour and affection he had won
 By some bold feat performed in early youth.
 At first his letters had a lover's fervour ;
 But cool and cooler as my fortunes changed
 Did they become, till, in a few months' space,
 They ceased to cast upon my lonely path
 One wintry ray.

DON RAFAEL, (*aside.*)

She little knows from whom
 Those letters came. (*Aloud.*) The heartless minion !

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

Then,

To soothe the irritation of a heart
 Too roughly treated, in the peaceful cloister,
 Unknown to all, I sought a home, and hoped,
 In works of love, and holy contemplation,
 Not only to forget the past, but make
 Some needful preparation for the future.
 Th' attempt of him who would have chained the ocean
 Was not more vain than that which now I made,
 To bind the wings of thought, that still would fly
 Beyond the convent walls ; and so I left
 Their sacred shelter, with the crowds to mingle
 That through the narrow streets of this vast city
 Roll on—a living tide.

DON RAFAEL.

Thou hadst a brother ?

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

A gallant boy, that with my father's fortune
Did venture all he had to risk—his life—
And lost it.

DON RAFAEL.

What thy purpose coming hither ?

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

To find an humble friend, who had the care
Of my first years, and, with the pittanee left
Of former wealth, secure a home with her.

DON RAFAEL.

And was that all ?

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

What else ?

DON RAFAEL.

It matters not.

But shouldst thou sometimes from thy lattice see
A certain cavalier—by chance, of course,—
Thy purpose seriously it would not cross ?
Speak not ;—thy blushes answer.

Thou no further

Shalt seek a home ; but, till a husband's love

Shall lure thee hence, be this thy place of rest.
No thanks. Who waits?

Enter SERVANT.

(*To SERVANT,*) Conduct this noble lady
Unto the chamber set apart for guests
Of highest worth.

(*To DONNA ANGUSTIA,*) Repose thee there awhile;
And in an hour my daughter shall attend thee.

[*Exeunt DONNA ANGUSTIA and SERVANT.*

Thou miserable fly! that rest and safety
Dost think to find in ruthless spider's web;—
Where, ere thou dream'st of danger, thou art meshed,
Killed and devoured;—thy folly—simple folk
Might call't the trustfulness of innocence—
Must in a friendly bosom wake contempt,
Then what in mine, where scorn of thy weak race—
To whose alliance do I owe my curse—
Inferior only is to my deep hate.

Enter DOLORES.

My Morning Star! how brightly dost thou shine
Upon the darkness of this nether world!
O who, in gazing on that radiant form,
That queenly brow and air of majesty,
Could dream that she, to whom all grace and grandeur
But native seem, was, scarce two months ago,
The humble, timid, peasant maid Dolores?

DOLORES.

Who wore humility as then she wore
 Her coarse habiliments—because it seemed
 Best suited to her state, not that she was
 Less proud than now, when both the Indies furnish
 The silks and gems that mark her new condition.
 But timid, say'st thou? Nay, I was not timid.
 Reserved I might have been : but 'neath the ice
 Of that reserve rolled a deep stream of courage,
 Strong and impetuous as a mountain torrent.
 No ; howsoever changed I seem to others,
 I know myself unchanged.

DON RAFAEL.

Even in thy fancies. "

For see I not, among the gems of price
 Thy beauty does enrich, an ornament
 Of little worth and rudest workmanship,
 Which thou dost seem to prize above all others,
 Because thou thought'st it once a thing of value ?

DOLORES.

And think it still. It was my father's gift.
 Start not. No other ear has heard me breathe
 The name that by our compact now is thine.
 Yet, poor as it may seem, this little cross
 Contains within it ~~hid~~ a priceless treasure ;—

A portion of the tree once sanctified
 By HIM whose bitter death thereon did purchase
 Life for the world.

DON RAFAEL.

A tale by cunning framed
 To cozen honest fools!

DOLORES.

It may be so.
 And yet the simple faith, that moves thy scorn,
 Gives to the heart that nurses it more peace
 Than all the boasted wisdom of the world—
 Which teaches man to doubt. The tree may ne'er
 Have stood on Calvary whence came the wood
 Enclosed in this poor cross. But, that once proven,
 How valueless would be what now is prized!
 And, to the loss of worth in this dear treasure,
 Another add—the owner's happiness.
 Keep thy philosophy ;—I'll none of it ;—
 But leave me faith.

DON RAFAEL.

Thou reasonest like a woman ;—
 Not with the head, but heart. Yet am I pleased
 To find thee faithful even to thy fancies,
 Or, mid the crowds now clamorous for thy favour,
 Might poor Don Luis prove no thriving suitor.

DOLORES.

The "poor Don Luis," if a suit he have,
 To press it surely has not been in haste,
 But, with a patience most commendable,
 Has kept aloof and given his place to others.

DON RAFAEL.

The diffidence of love.

DOLORES.

Th' indifference, rather,
 Of one who ne'er has known the touch of love.
 For had one spark of that Promethean fire
 Fallen on his heart, the marble would ere this
 Have into passion warmed. He knows not love.

*Enter SERVANT with a letter, which he presents to DON RAFAEL, and
 withdraws.*

DON RAFAEL, (*after reading.*)

Well, for a man who knows not love, Don Luis
 Most truly is a strange one. Here he offers
 A noble name, a title won by deeds
 Of high emprise, a fortune all but regal,
 And, with all these, a hand a princess might
 With pride accept, unto a certain lady
 He cares not for,—if means he what he writes.

DOLORES, (*eagerly.*)

Give me the letter. (*Takes, and reads.*)

Is this true ? am I—

Dolores Sanchez, poor and lowly born,
 Whose love has been as fervid, and unreasoning,
 As that of the poor pagan for the orb
 Which to his ignorance is indeed the God
 It doth but symbolize—among so many,
 Rich, noble, beautiful, to be thus favoured ?
 The wife of him whom I would rather serve—
 Did he but love me—as his meanest slave,
 Than with another share the proudest throne
 The sun looks down upon ! O my full heart !
 If it in words found not relief, 'twould burst
 From this excess of joy !

DON RAFAEL.

Nay, nay, be calm.

The lover is not far behind his missive ;
 And should he be a witness of these transports,
 Too high a value might he set upon
 The honour he hath done us.

DOLORES.

Fear not me.

To her who is most ignorant, true love
 And maiden modesty, beyond what courts
 Or worldly policy can do, will teach
 That sweet timidity which has for man—
 Who still mistakes affected coyness for

True womanly reserve—so great a charm.
My cup of pleasure even now is dashed
With bitterness of fear, lest I be found
Of him unworthy.

DON RAFAEL.

Yet be not too humble.

At what we rate ourselves the world is apt
To take us, not at what's our real worth.
Don Luis is a true hidalgo, proud
Of his old name and pure Castilian blood,
And would not think the hand of the Infanta
Too much for his deservings ; and in thee
Might easily mistake humility
For conscious want of merit. To our rank,
For which we are indebted to the king,
Thou something ow'st, but to thy beauty, which
Than rank is nobler, since it comes from One
To whom the king is vassal, more, far more ;
And thou must show him he confers no honour
That is not fully given back to him.

DOLORES.

A needless admonition ; yet I thank thee,
For the good care thou tak'st to keep awake
The pride thou think'st might slumber : but no fear.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Senhor Don Luis de Vivero, Lord Marquis of Ronda.

DON RAFAEL.

Say that I come to him. (*Exit* SERVANT.) Remain thou
here,
Until I bring thy lover to thy feet.

[*Exit.*

DOLORES.

My lover to my feet? My lover? He,
For whom my love has been idolatry,
Is he *my* lover? O my wildest dreams,
Born 'mid the hills and nurtured by the streams
Where late I roamed a melancholy sprite,
At war with fate, ne'er soared to such a height!
And, as I quaff th' intoxicating cup
His generous love brims for me, rushes up,
From this surcharg'd heart, through every vein
A flood of joy so great, that my weak brain
Reels under it; and, did not pride repress
My tears, I now could weep for happiness.

[*Retires up, and throws herself on a couch.*

A C T I I I .

S C E N E I .

A hall in the Palace of DON RAFAEL. Enter MIGUEL, LOPE and JUANA.

JUANA.

WELL, of all things in this world, I do like weddings most, for every one looks so happy there, that one is sure to be put into good humour by them with all the world and the rest of mankind. Even old aunt Barbara has had a smile upon her frosty visage the whole of this blessed day.

LOPE.

Dost mean to say, that every one looked happy at this wedding?

JUANA.

To be sure I do. Every face that I looked on, from that of his Eminence, the Cardinal Archbishop, down to that of the beggar who, by some means, managed to squeeze his way into the vast cathedral, already filled to suffocation, wore a look of most decided satisfaction.

LOPE.

Thou couldst not have looked very closely at the bridegroom then, my girl, for, to my thinking, his face wore any thing but a look of satisfaction.

MIGUEL.

Then 'twas not alone my fancy which gave to his face the expression of pain I saw stamped upon it? I had been very angry with Don Luis, for his seeming forgetfulness of his first love, the gentle Donna Angustia; but my anger was changed to pity this morning, when I saw him at the altar; for I then knew that memory and conscience were at strife within him, and between them he was suffering most intensely. Not to be the husband of the beautiful Dolores, and master of all her father's wealth to boot, would I at that moment have changed places with our master.

LOPE.

Miguel.

MIGUEL.

Well? .

LOPE.

Thou needst not fear to speak before Juana, who, though a woman, is capable, I assure thee, of keeping a secret.

JUANA.

That indeed I am.

LOPE.

For as long as we've been married, now nearly five years—

JUANA.

Nay, 'tis five years past. Five years, two months, and twenty-six days.

LOPE.

And some odd hours. What a memory thou hast! Well, as long as we've been man and wife, I have never yet been able to get from her one secret.

JUANA.

What is that?

LOPE.

Her age.

JUANA.

Bah! that's a secret no one need trouble himself even to look into thy mouth to learn, for thy age is written so plainly in thy face that they who run may read. But as thou wast saying to Miguel?

LOPE.

Didst thou remark any thing peculiar in the manner of the bride's father before the ceremony this morning?

MIGUEL.

Nothing. I was so interested in watching the movements of Don Luis, that I had no eyes for any thing else. Was there any thing peculiar in it?

LOPE.

So I thought. As he was about to enter the cathedral, he seemed at first to shrink back with fear; but suddenly an expression of mingled rage and hatred passed over his swarthy visage, and then, with a proud step, and an air of triumph, he walked forward, like one who had achieved a great victory.

JUANA.

You both know, I suppose, what the people say of this man;—that he is not the real Don Rafael de Chacon, who actually died in the Indies, I don't know how many years ago, but one of the many Moors still lingering in the country, who, while outwardly professing to be Christians, are rank infidels at heart, and feel nothing but hatred for our most holy religion.

MIGUEL.

I know such a story has been whispered about, and am afraid there's more truth in it, than is generally to be found in what "the people say." Yet Heaven forbid it should be so! for I am sure old Don Manuel would not rest in his grave, if it proved true that his son has married a Moresco woman.

LOPE.

Well, be she Moor or be she Christian, one thing is certain, our new mistress is an eminently beautiful lady.

JUANA.

So I've heard thee say before, but, for my part, I can't really see where her great beauty is. Her figure is good, and all that, I grant thee ; but then she is so very fair, which isn't at all the kind of complexion that I admire, though some may.

LOPE.

Thou'rt so in love with thine own face, my dark-browed beauty, thou hast no admiration to spare for any other.

JUANA.

Neither didst thou seem to have when I was a maid.

LOPE.

True, my dear ; but five years have passed since then, and one's opinions have time to change in five years.

MIGUEL.

We've had a busy day, and not much less busy night, and now 'tis time to rest, so let us to bed. Good night, or rather morning.

LOPE *and* JUANA.

Good night.

[*Exit* MIGUEL *at one door, and exeunt* LOPE *and* JUANA *at another.*

SCENE II.

An oratory. DONNA ANGUSTIA discovered kneeling. She rises and comes forward.

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

The night is passed. Not that alone which wrapped
The earth in gloom, but the far deeper night
That lay upon my heart, and with the morn
Comes joy indeed—the joy of a brave spirit,
That's in the conflict been, and has o'ercome.
Yet 'twas most terrible! and now I shudder,
In looking back upon it, when I think
How great, at first, my weakness, and what fear
Beset me in the outset. How I shrank
And paltered, when the beautiful Dolores,
My innocent, unconscious rival, urged
That I would throw aside the weeds of woe—
But for one day—and grace by my attendance
Her nuptials. And when I at last consented,
'Twas with a pang that seemed to rend my soul.
But stifling in my breast a cry of anguish,
And forcing back an upward gush of tears,
With show of calmness that I did not feel,
I went to meet the man whose broken faith
Had orphaned me anew. A moment—and,
Thank Heaven! a moment only—when I felt
His presence—for I saw him not—all things

Before me and around passed from my sight,
And in that crowded temple did I stand
All desolate—alone! Then at the altar?
Among the bridemaids, nearest to the bride,
I took my place;—but, ah! he knew it not.
Knew not that I it was who drew the glove
From the fair hand on which he placed the ring
That bound him to another;—thought not of
The fond and trusting heart on which he then
Was trampling ruthlessly. A bitter sense
Of wrong aroused the fiend of wrath within me,
And fiercely then did the desire of vengeance
Like a volcano in my bosom burn!
But passed that feeling;—for the flame was quenched
By waters of Heaven's grace;—and, to the fury
That raged before, a sudden calm succeeded;—
But such a calm as knows the human breast
When death's cold hand lies heavy on its pulse!
The power to suffer soon revived; and then
I from the crowd did steal, and from the gaze
Of curious eyes, to seek for solace here;—
And here have found it! And, that I no more
May lose it, I at once will leave this place,
And hide myself where I shall ne'er again
Meet him whom I can see not without pain.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Another apartment in DON RAFAEL'S. Enter DOLORES reading.

DOLORES.

"I love, O I love thee! My heart is a shrine
One image enclosing;—that image is thine.
And morning, and evening, and all the long day,
My soul bends before it due homage to pay.

"I love, O I love thee! Thy name is a spell
The mutinous rage of my passions to quell:
Thy presence my spirit ne'er fails to rejoice,
Whose sun is thy smile, and whose music thy voice.

"O yes, I do love thee! and for the rich mine
Of love that I yield thee, I ask nought of thine,
But four simple words—softly whispered to me
When none else can hear thee—'I, dearest, love thee!'"

When none can hear me? O could my weak voice,
Like the archangel's trump, through all the earth
Be heard, I would proclaim to all the earth,
That I do love thee! LOVE? It is a word
Too weak, to speak the deep, absorbing passion
That fills my soul for thee! No, adoration
Alone can rightly name it!

Enter DON RAFAEL.

O my lord

Thou art most welcome. I have news for thee
I know will give thee pleasure.

DON RAFAEL.

What to thee
Can yield a joy, to me must do no less.

DOLORES.

Thou know'st the doubts that did distract my heart,
Even when Don Luis led me to the altar,
That not his love for me, but the obedience
He owed the king had prompted to the act?

DON RAFAEL.

Yes, and how groundless were they, as I strove
To prove; but thou wert not to be convinced.

DOLORES.

Alas, I knew too well how little worthy
I was of love like his, and therefore doubted.
But here's a charm that, worn upon the heart,
Will bar the entrance there of doubts and fears,
And all conspirators against the peace
And safety of Love's throne. Wouldst look upon it?

[*Gives him the paper.*]

DON RAFAEL.

What's this? what's this? O 'tis impossible!
He would not dare!—Beneath the very roof!—
It cannot, cannot be!

DOLORES.

What is it moves thee?

DON RAFAEL.

There must be some mistake. Whence came this
paper?

DOLORRES.

I found it on the table, where last night
I laid the carcanet Don Luis gave me.
'Twas his first gift, and highly did I prize it.
Yet 'twas less precious than that simple paper.

DON RAFAEL.

I pray thee let me tear it.

DOLORRES, (*snatching it.*)

Art thou mad?

DON RAFAEL.

Not I;—but there is that may make thee so.

DOLORRES.

Thou seek'st to fright me.

[*Turns over the paper and reads.*

“To Angustia.”

Mine eyes deceive me! or some fiend has writ
The characters that glare upon me here,
And not Don Luis! O I should indeed
Go mad, could I believe this writing his!

DON RAFAEL.

Alas, my girl, I grieve to undeceive thee,

But the same hand that traced those loving lines
 That superscription wrote. This is my fault ;
 For I remember now a story told—
 But thought it then mere gossip of the court—
 About Don Luis and a certain lady,
 Of his own neighbourhood, that to her virtue
 Less flattering was than to his gallantry.

DOLORES.

And this is she. I see it all. The tale
 That won our pity was a fiction, framed
 To gain an entrance to the house where he
 Was known a frequent guest, and might in time
 Be more ; that their vile intercourse, beneath
 The sanction of an honest roof, and hidden
 From keen eye of the world, might be continued.

DON RAFAEL.

I hope thou mayst be wrong in thy suspicions,
 But own they look like truth.

DOLORES.

Or true or false,
 I will have proof.

[*Going.*

DON RAFAEL.

What wouldst thou ?

DOLORES.

Charge the soreeress

With her black scheme ; and if she own it not,
With this sharp steel the truth rip from her heart !

[Exhibits a poniard, and exit.]

DON RAFAEL.

I pull the wires, and lo ! these human puppets
Dance at my pleasure. The good king loves gold ;
And without stint I to the cravings yield
Of his insatiate avarice, till he,
To show his royal gratitude, obliges
The noblest of his nobles, and the truest
Of his true subjects, prove his loyalty—
By peril of his life already proven—
By sacrifice of-what to God alone
Should man submit—his will, and by this act
Are loving hearts forever torn asunder,
And dearest hopes and pure affections crushed.
While this poor fool, who fancies all's been done
For her advancement, goaded by the passions
Of hatred and revenge that rage within her,
Completes the evil which I did but plan,
And in his work thus each assists the devil.
Yet these are of the race that would dethrone
Omnipotence, and give Heaven's rightful worship
To their new deity—the mind of man !

[Exit.]

SCENE IV.

An anteroom with a door opening in the centre. DONNA ANGUSTIA enters hurriedly, and is met by DON LUIS.

DON LUIS.

Great Heaven! Angustia?

DONNA ANGUSTIA, (*aside.*)

Don Luis here.

DON LUIS.

O how is this? Art thou, whom I have sought
So fruitlessly throughout the land, now found,
When better were it—for my peace, at least—
Thou hadst been lost forever? Cruel girl!
How couldst thou trifle with a heart that loved
So truly as did mine?

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

'Tis useless now
To dwell upon the past. But I ne'er sought
To shun thee. Yet, when absence and neglect
Taught that I was forgotten, if I strove—
It may have vainly been—then to forget,
Thou wouldst not call it trifling? Fare thee well.

DON LUIS.

A moment yet. What mean'st thou by neglect?

There was no week, till thy strange disappearance,
 I did not in my letters bare my soul
 Before thee ;—showing all its love—its weakness,
 Believing for the one thou wouldst the other
 Look kindly on ;—not thinking, in my folly,
 That mine own act was in thy heart destroying
 Th' affection I had built my trust upon.

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

Blame not thy letters. None for many months
 Did reach me. There has been some power malign
 At work to separate us. It is done.
 Then from affliction do not let us take
 Its dignity, by o'er the past lamenting.
 But rather, bearing firmly, yet with meekness,
 What bear we must, take from our enemy
 All chance to triumph in our wretchedness.

DON LUIS.

Angustia, thou couldst not speak thus calmly
 Hadst thou e'er loved.

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

It may be that I have not.
 It may be that the anguish borne for months,
 That dimmed mine eyes and robbed my cheek of bloom,
 And bowed my form with premature old age,
 Was not from love neglected or contemned,

But wounded pride, or maiden fantasy.
 It matters little now for me to say,
 Or thee to know, if I have loved or not,
 Since we have met for the last time.

DON LUIS.

O say not
 For the last time! While I have strength to hold
 Thee in my grasp, I will not let thee hence.

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

Come not more near, my lord; and timely think
 Of what now separates us—and forever.

DON LUIS.

I can of nothing think, but thy dear presence,
 And mine own love, the passion that from boyhood
 Has been the very life-pulse of my being.

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

No more, no more. Think of the fair Dolores,
 To whom thy faith was pledged but yesternorn.

Enter DOLORES at the centre door, followed by DON RAFAEL.

DON LUIS.

Why dost thou name her whom a cruel fate
 Has made the barrier to our happiness?
 I never loved—I cannot love—Dolores.
 She is my wife, 'tis true; but at the altar

My heart was silent when passed from my lips
Th' irrevocable vow; *that* kept unchanged
The faith to thee once plighted.

[DOLORES *takes a step forward, but is held back by DON RAFAEL.*

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

Hist, my lord.

Some one approaches. Suffer me to go.

DON LUIS.

Since 'tis thy wish; but we must meet again.

[*Exeunt severally.*

DOLORES and DON RAFAEL *come forward.*

DOLORES.

Why didst thou hold me back?

DON RAFAEL.

What wouldst have done?

DOLORES.

Slaked in the blood of their false hearts my soul's
Hot thirst for vengeance! Slain them where they stood!

DON RAFAEL.

Thou wouldst have failed in the attempt. Thy hand
Too feeble is;—too pitiful thy nature;—
For thee to act the priestess of Revenge.
Why, in thy grasp the sacrificial knife
Would be as little harmful as thy bodkin.

DOLORES.

Thou dost not know the strength a will determined
 Can give a feeble hand. Thou dost not know
 How sure the cry of wronged affection drowns
 The voice of pity in the gentlest bosom.

DON RAFAEL.

Thou hast been wronged.

DOLORES.

O have I not? There ne'er
 Has woman been so wronged!

DON RAFAEL.

And for that wrong
 Thou wouldst have reparation?

DOLORES.

I'm not one
 If smitten on one cheek to turn the other.
 I would have reparation;—and I will!

DON RAFAEL.

And so thou shalt. But put away thy dagger;
 For we will have no blood. [*Takes a rose from her hair.*
 Is there in nature
 A thing more innocent than this in seeming?
 And yet may it be made an instrument

Of death as certain as the steel thou bear'st,
Yet leave upon the hands no marks of guilt.
Thou look'st incredulous. If that thy purpose
Fail not, thou shalt have proof I do not rate
Too high the potency of this frail flower
To aid thee in thy need.

DOLORES.

My purpose fail?

O, till this heart forget the bitter wrong
By him inflicted it has loved so long!—
So madly! or the serpent guile of her
Who of its peace hath been the murderer,
Though heaven should plead, and hell eternal woe
Should threat, my purpose will I not forego,
But satiate my soul with vengeance! See
The end secured;—the means I leave to thee.

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T I V .

SCENE I.

A street. Enter COUNT FERDINAND DEL HOYO.

COUNT FERDINAND.

Is this the welcome that my heart leaped forward
 To meet, when late I pressed the strand of Spain?
 My noble father dead! My heritage
 Possessed by strangers! and my sister gone!
 Lost to herself;—perhaps to honour lost!
 And no one left, of all I knew in youth,
 To cheer the wanderer with a kindly greeting!
 O cheerfully the treasures won by years
 Of toils, of trials, and privations sore,
 Would I relinquish now to be again
 The boy whose heart basked in the light of home.
 But here comes one in whom, when last we parted,
 I hoped on my return to find a brother.

Enter DON LUIS.

Well met, Don Luis.

DON LUIS, (*bowing and passing on.*)

Sir, I greet thee kindly,

COUNT FERDINAND.

A moment, if 'twill please thee grant so much.

DON LUIS.

Some other time will I do so with pleasure :
At present I am sent for by the king,
And may not linger.

[*Going.*]

COUNT FERDINAND.

Dost thou fear to know me ?
The story then was sooth. Thou hast betrayed
A noble lady unto foul dishonour,
And in her shame abandoned her to death.
Draw, and defend thy life.

DON LUIS.

What means this folly ?

COUNT FERDINAND.

I have no time for words ;—look to thyself.

[*They fight, and DON LUIS is wounded.*]*Enter MIGUEL.*

MIGUEL.

My master wounded !

DON LUIS.

Slightly, my good Miguel.

MIGUEL.

Who is this ruffian brawler, who will not

Let honest people walk the streets in peace?
Count Ferdinand Del Hoyo!

DON LUIS.

Can it be?

COUNT FERDINAND.

Thou know'st me now?

DON LUIS.

And had I sooner known thee,
I might have by a word disarmed thine anger,
And saved thee from an act thou wilt regret.

COUNT FERDINAND.

Speak to me of my sister. Does she live?

DON LUIS.

She does, and not in safety less than honour.
Believe not this upon my word; but come,
And let thine eyes convince thee of my truth.
Lend me thine arm, good Miguel, I grow faint.

COUNT FERDINAND.

O my accursèd rashness! Let me, too,
Assist thee.

DON LUIS.

Would thou never hadst left Spain.

[Exit, supported by COUNT FERDINAND and MIGUEL.]

SCENE II.

A richly furnished apartment. Enter DOLORES.

DOLORES.

He never loved—he cannot love—Dolores !
 Why did he wed her then ? She sought, not him ;
 Nor yet by word or look solicited
 The least return for the vast sum of love
 She had bestowed upon him. Cruel lord !
 What could provoke thee to this contumely
 Of one whose fault was loving thee too well ?
 If thou couldst not accept the heart thou'dst won,
 Thou might'st have passed it by, and trod not on't !

Enter DON RAFAEL.

DON RAFAEL.

Cheer thee, my girl ! thy wishes are fulfilled.
 I have conveyed thy gift to fair Angustia,
 And on her bosom doth she wear the flower
 With whose sweet perfume she inhaletH Death.
 Hast not one smile to thank me for the zeal
 I've shown to do thee service ?

DOLORES.

I, alas !

Shall never smile again. Smiles are the light
 Of happy hearts—happy in innocence—

On cheeks that know not shame. When all within
 Is black with crime, the simulated smile,
 Like gleam of lamp 'mid heavy charnel damps,
 Gives a new horror to the face of death.
 I cannot smile my thanks for the prompt aid
 Which thou hast rendered in this fearful work:—
 And yet I thank thee.

DON RAFAEL.

Came that from thy heart?

DOLORES.

If such I have, which, only for the pain
 I feel here gnawing, (*laying her hand on her bosom,*)
 I should sometimes doubt,
 All is so cold, dull, desolate within!
 O Heaven! what have I done, that thou hast laid
 This heavy curse upon me? Blasted all
 The budding joys of life? Torn rudely thence
 The life of life within my breast? and given
 My never-dying soul to be the sport
 Of torturing fiends now and eternally?

DON RAFAEL.

If thou already dost repent the part
 Which thou wouldst play in this stern tragedy,
 When writhing 'neath most undeserv'd wrong,
 By which were outraged love and woman's pride,

Say but the word, and, ere it is too late,
 Will I undo the work I have begun,
 And from the grasp of death Angustia loosing,
 Will give her back to life—and to Don Luis.

DOLORES.

What devil prompted thee to couple thus
 Their names? What! give her back to life and *him!*
 No! though my heart-strings shrivel in the fire
 Remorse shall ever burning keep within me
 For this one deed, I will not have her live
 To triumph o'er me!

DON RAFAEL.

Spoken like thyself.

*Enter DON LUIS supported by COUNT FERDINAND and MIGUEL, who
 place him in a seat.*

DOLORES, (*going eagerly towards him.*)

My lord! my husband!

DON LUIS, (*coldly.*)

Do not be alarmed.

A slight mishap. A thing of little moment.

DOLORES, (*drawing back.*)

I'm glad 'tis nothing worse. (*Aside.*) He doth refuse
 From me the sympathy a stranger would
 With thankfulness accept! O it is plain

He never loved me—never ! 'Tis as well.

[Retires up with DON RAFAEL.

DON LUIS.

Go, Miguel, bid some one summon hither
 Donna Angustia. (*Exit MIGUEL.*) Thy sister, Count,
 Is now beneath this roof, the honoured guest
 Of its fair mistress. . She will tell thee all
 Has happened in thy absence. How mischance
 First separated those whom early friendship
 So close had bound it seemed that death alone
 Could disunite them ; strange misapprehensions
 Then daily wider made the breach between them,
 Till it became impassable, and they
 Grew into strangers who had once been lovers ;
 And how—but she is here.

DONNA ANGUSTIA, (*entering, followed by MIGUEL.*)

O where is he ?

[COUNT FERDINAND *meets her. They embrace.*

My brother Ferdinand ! my dear, dear brother !

COUNT FERDINAND.

Angustia, my sister, is it thou ?

Alas, how changed ! If 'twere not for thy smile,
 I scarce should know thee !

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

Ah, my memory

Then better is than thine, for I had known—
Changed though thou art—my brother 'mong a thousand.
But to the poor man his one piece of gold
Has all the value of the miser's treasure,
And every mark—how slight soe'er to others—
To him is so familiar, hardly could he
E'er fail to know it. Thou wert my one coin.

COUNT FERDINAND.

But, dearest sister, thou hast suffered greatly ?

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

None love who suffer not. I have but shared
The common lot. And though I may have murmur'd
Against a fate I thought too sad, I since
Have learned to bow submissively to Heaven,
And say—and from my heart—"Thy will be done!"
But we will talk no longer of the past,
Its sorrows and its sufferings, but the present—
The happy present—and the hopeful future,
Which will for all that's gone make full amends.

COUNT FERDINAND.

O we shall be so happy ! How is this ?
Thy cheek has sudden lost the hue of life !
Thy lips are white and quivering ! and thy frame
As with an ague shivers ! Speak, O speak,
And tell me what is this ?

DONNA ANGUSTIA.

A moment, brother,
Let me be seated. A strange giddiness
Has sudden seized me. It will pass.

DON LUIS, (*starting up.*)

She faints!

DOLORES, (*who has come slowly forward.*)

SHE DIES!

COUNT FERDINAND.

No, no! Heaven could not be so cruel,
So soon to rob me of mine only treasure!

DON LUIS.

She does but faint. Quick, Miguel, quick! some water!
O, by the memory of past happy days,
Angustia, I adjure thee, leave us not!

DOLORES.

Thou call'st right lustily;—but call'st in vain.
Her ear is closed, my lord, even to the voice of love;
And all thy vast possessions now would fail
One hour to ransom of her forfeit life.
The serpent, that around a trusting heart
Had coiled to sting it, writhes in the death-struggle;—
And I it was that crushed it!

DON LUIS.

Gracious Heaven!

O what could tempt thee, thou most beauteous devil!
To crime so damnable?

DOLORÉS.

Insult and wrong,
The keenest, most enduring that to heart
Of woman e'er was offered, and the last
To be forgiven.

DONNA ANGUSTIA, (*feebly raising herself.*)

I ne'er wronged thee, lady—
From dying lips thou wilt believe the truth—
Not even in thought: and for thy wrong against
My life, may Heaven forgive thee—as I do.

[Falls back and dies.

[COUNT FERDINAND and DON LUIS kneel by the body of DONNA
ANGUSTIA. DOLORÉS stands in an attitude of horror; and
DON RAFAEL, who has remained apart, regards all with looks
of exultation.

SCENE III.

An anteroom. Enter JUANA.

JUANA.

Heaven help me and guide me! for I really don't know what to do, or which way to turn. I've been sent for somebody, or something, but, am so bewildered, I can't remember for whom or for what. My poor, poor master! O that abominable woman! I was always sure she would bring evil upon us, for all Lope had to say in her favour; and I was right, as I always am. Where there's so much outward beauty, there is invariably some inward deformity. Nine times out of ten, a fair face is nothing more than the covering of a very black heart. 'Tis not without reason that the Africans make their devil white. Only to think of the gentle Donna Angustia, the most amiable, the most pious creature in the world, to be snapped, as one may say, like a flower from the stem, and cast upon the earth, to wither and rot like a common weed! O what a world is this to live in; where one isn't sure of one's happiness as long as one can give it a name. I'm sick of it; and only for poor Lope, who would miss me sadly, and my darling babes, who, I'm sure, would have a step-mother over them in three months! I wouldn't care if I were to leave it to-morrow. But the worst of it is, one can't very well go from it

when one likes, or return again when one has once gone, if one shouldn't happen to be altogether satisfied with one's new place. Heaven bless us, and keep us, say I. Amen.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

A hall in the Inquisition. A number of FAMILIARS present, and among them the STRANGER in disguise. Enter GRAND INQUISITOR and two others.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

I've, brethren, summoned you to consultation,
Upon a subject that will task our wisdom
How to dispose of.

I have in my hand

A letter that relates a story strange,
And one that would, to those who have been spared
The painful sight familiar to our eyes,
Of the bold wickedness of this our day,
Too monstrous seem for credibility.
The taste of delicate viands and rare wines
Still lingers on the palates of the guests,
Who revelled at the feast, in honour given
Of the espousals of our monarch's favourite,
Don Luis de Vivero, and the fair—
Report says, wondrous fair—and high-born daughter
Of old Don Rafael de Chacon, who

Accounted is the wealthiest lord in Spain.
 And yet already 'gainst that noble bride
 A charge is brought of crimes so horrible,
 That one grows sick at heart to think it true ;
 Of compassing the death, by sorcery,
 Or some unheard of poison, of a lady,
 Who thought herself beneath the roof of friendship,
 And safe from every harm.

FIRST INQUISITOR.

Our duty, father,
 To me seems plain. We must to our tribunal
 Bring the accus'd ; and as she shall prove
 Or innocent or guilty, deal with her.

SECOND INQUISITOR.

This may offend the king, whose favourite
 Her husband is.

FIRST INQUISITOR.

And if we do it not,
 We shall offend against our consciences ;
 For we are sworn to deal impartially
 With every one, and must not be forsworn.
 We are the ministers of Justice, brother,
 And Justice is above the king.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Thou dost

But give expression to the resolution
I had already formed. But, to prevent
All scandal, I with strictest privacy,
Unknown even to her household, have had hither
The lady brought. Without she waits our summons.

FIRST INQUISITOR.

But her accuser ?

GRAND INQUISITOR.

If he keep the promise
Here written, will be present. (*They ascend their seats.*)
(*To a FAMILIAR.*) Into court
Bring thou the prisoner.

[*Exit FAMILIAR, and returns with DOLORES.*]

DOLORES.

Already known

A criminal ! How swift is retribution
The guilty to o'ertake ! If I thus shrink
Before the justice of my fellow-worms,
How shall I meet that of the Infinite ?
O desolate indeed is that poor soul
Who dare not in its need ask Heaven for aid !
Whose sin is beyond pardon ! Such am I !

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Daughter, advance. Throw from thy brow that veil,
Which poorly hides thee from the eye of Heaven,

And let us look upon thy face. (*Unveils.*) Poor child!
 Sorrow and shame, it may be, too, remorse,
 Are written there, yet are the lines of guilt
 Not deeply graven. Dost thou know of what
 Thou art accused ?

DOLORES.

I know.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Guilty, or not ?

But pause ere thou repliest. Thou art not forced
 To be thine own accuser. But thy guilt
 Once known, by thy confession, or by proof
 Unquestionable, nought to us is left—
 Who, not thy rank or dignity regarding,
 Can only see in thee a criminal—
 But hand thee o'er to justice. With the crimes
 Of murder and of sorcery art thou charged.
 Art guilty, or not guilty ?

DOLORES.

Sorcery ?

Charged with the hellish crime of sorcery ?
 O Holy Fathers! though I cannot say
 That other sin lies not upon my soul,
 As I shall answer at the judgment seat
 Of the **ALL JUST**, of this I am not guilty.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Command the presence of the witness.

STRANGER, (*coming forward.*)

Here

Am I, most reverend lords and holy fathers,
Obedient to your summons.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

• In few words,

Relate what thou dost know against this woman.

STRANGER.

She is a vile impostor. Peasant-born,
She has deceived the world into belief
Of her illustrious birth; and, with the aid
Of damned arts, inveigled the affections
Of one of noble name and princely nature,
Don Luis de Vivero, who stood pledged
Unto a lovely and most virtuous lady,
The daughter of the late Count Juan del Hoyo,
Whom this base woman with her sorceries
Hath wickedly destroyed.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Hast proof of this ?

STRANGER.

Most ample. Let appear Sebastian Diaz.

DOLORES, (*aside.*)

Sebastian here? O Heaven! I dare not see him!
 (*Aloud.*) No need to summon other witnesses.
 That I am peasant-born, as this man saith,
 Is simple truth. For that I do not blush.
 For though the stream from which my life is drawn,
 Hath coursed for ages through ignoble veins,
 By crime or shame till now 'twas never sullied.
 And true it is that I—to madness stung
 By fancied wrong—most wickedly conspired
 Against an innocent life, and for that act
 Do merit death. But it is false that e'er
 I stooped to art to win the heart of him
 Whose love I prized beyond what earth can give,
 Or Heaven has promised: and as false it is,
 That I the aid of magic ever sought
 My ends to compass. Fathers, this I swear!

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Withdraw the prisoner. We have need of time
 To judge aright the nature of her crime,
 For though, by her own showing, death has she
 Deserved, we know not what that death should be.

DOLORES.

Whate'er you will. To your decree I bow.
 That which I dared I will not shrink from now;
 And meanly sue for mercy.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Save to Heaven,
When, if thou ask, it shall to thee be given.

STRANGER, (*aside.*)

Not calmly thus will she her life resign ;
And when the struggle comes, I know her mine.

[*Exit* DOLORES *in charge of* FAMILIAR.

A C T V.

SCENE I.

A cell in the Inquisition. DOLORES alone, in the dress of a condemned criminal.

DOLORES.

WILL the night never end? Must still my heart
Yearn for the day, and not be satisfied?
Shall I no more behold the blessed sun?
Warm in his genial beams this shivering frame,
And these cold-palsied limbs? or bathe my brow,
Hot with the burning thoughts that scorch my brain,
In the delicious coolness of the morn?
O once again to stand with nought between
Heaven's azure cope and me, of the few hours
That still are mine one half would I relinquish!
Nay, I would give them all for one brief moment
Of light and freedom on my native hills.
My native hills! how lovely do ye rise
Before me in the golden light of morn,
Or evening's purple splendour! while my home—
The safe and happy home my madness spurned—
Now circled by you with the loving care
My infancy that guarded, me reproaches
In its dumb sadness for my base desertion.
I must not look that way!

- *Enter a FAMILIAR followed by SEBASTIAN.*

SEBASTIAN.

Is this Dolores!

Alas, how changed from that once glorious being!
Yet glorious amid her desolation!

DOLORES.

Who is it speaks?

SEBASTIAN.

A neighbour and a friend.

DOLORES.

O do not mock me in my misery!
The wretched have no friends. What, dost thou weep?
'Tis very kind to do for me what I
Cannot do for myself. I have no tears.
My heart has drunk and turned them into gall.

SEBASTIAN.

O speak not thus!

DOLORES.

That voice! It is Sebastian's.
A strain of the old music of my home!
What brings thee here? Thou hast not come to triumph
In the disgrace of one who did thee wrong?

SEBASTIAN.

Heaven knows my heart, I have not. Could my life

But ransom thine, and to the world's esteem
 And to thine own restore thee, cheerfully
 I now would yield it up. To live for thee
 Has been to me denied; but I would prove,
 By dying for thee, what my love has been.

DOLORES.

Thy love I never doubted. But no more
 Talk we of this. Now tell me of my parents.
 Do they yet live?

SEBASTIAN.

They live—where life's immortal.

DOLORES.

Dead? dead? Then I, O Heaven! them too have murdered!
 And cursed they not with dying lips the child
 Who on their honoured age brought grief and shame?
 What could they do but curse her!

SEBASTIAN.

Their last charge
 To me, was that I should seek out their daughter,
 And to her bear assurance of their love,
 Their pardon and their blessing. That alone
 Has brought me here; and now do I go forth
 Into a world that is, by loss of thee,
 Returned to chaos.

DOLORES.

Gentle heart and true,
 With as much pity as this iron bosom
 Can feel for human woe, I pity thee,
 Who, hadst thou ne'er my baleful influence known,
 Mightst now be happy as thou dost deserve.
 But all regrets are useless! Go, Sebastian,
 And pray to Heaven thou mayst forget me.

SEBASTIAN.

No.

Memory of thee, with all its bitter griefs,
 Than joy is sweeter with forgetfulness.
 Farewell!

DOLORES.

Farewell! Our parting is—forever!

[Exit SEBASTIAN, followed by the FAMILIAR.]

Thou generous soul, not least among my crimes
 Shall reckoned be my pitiless return
 To thy enduring love.

[Turns, and discovers the STRANGER as DON RAFAEL.]

Thou here, lord duke?

DON RAFAEL.

Fit greeting dost thou call this for a friend
 Thou hast not seen for days?

DOLORES.

A friend, sayst thou?

DON RAFAEL.

What means this coldness? Am I not thy friend?

DOLORES.

My friend? O doubtless! in the common meaning
Of that abusèd word. A true world friend,
Who has a blessing for the prosperous,
But leaves the needy to his wretchedness.

DON RAFAEL.

I did not leave thee friendless. Though unseen,
I still was near thee—if not to avert—
To mitigate thy doom.

DOLORES.

And failed.

DON RAFAEL.

Not so.

For I am here to save thee;—give thee back
To life, to liberty, and happiness!

DOLORES.

To life? Can'st thou bring back the dead? Restore
The world's esteem?—my own heart's consciousness
Of rectitude? Till thou canst do all this,
Thou canst not give me life; for they are dead
In whom I lived; my fame, a sightless corse,
Unburied lies upon the earth, for birds

Obscene to gorge on; and my conscience is
 So sepulchred in sin, that Heaven alone
 Can quicken it. What then is liberty,
 Or what is happiness for such as I?

DON RAFAEL.

There is a world beyond this speck of earth,
 Which men call Spain, where mind is yet untrammelled,
 And the distinction recognized between
 Crime and misfortune; where true happiness
 Is not, as here, a thing intangible,
 Or loan wrung from a miser, but the gift
 Of nature, large as the desires of man;
 And where to love all that is loveable
 Is held a sacred duty. Thou shalt be,
 If such thou wilt, of this fair realm the queen.

DOLORES.

Is there a power in the fair world thou paintest
 To stifle memory's voice? First find me that,
 Ere more thou sayst of happiness and love.

DON RAFAEL.

Tut! Memory is man's servant;—not his master;—
 And speaks but when 'tis bidden. When success
 Has laurel-crowned the hero, 'mid the songs
 And shouts that greet him from adoring crowds,
 Would memory dare remind him of the groans

And curses of the thousands crushed beneath
The car of victory ?

DOLORES.

I feel how false
Thy reasoning is, but cannot answer it.
Go. With my misery would I be alone.

DON RAFAEL.

I cannot, will not leave thee to the fate
The cruelty of man—which he calls *justice*—
Is now for thee preparing. Couldst thou bear—
Whose pride Omnipotence alone could bow—
When dragged a malefactor through the streets,
To meet in every face to which thou turnest
Or hate or loathing ? hear from every tongue
The cruel gibe, the bitter taunt, or deep,
Hoarse imprecation on the murderess
Of friend and husband ?

DOLORES.

Husband ? No, oh no !
Of all the world whom I have loved the best !
They will not say that I have murdered *him*.

DON RAFAEL.

They do so say already. He is dead.
And to thy sorceries, and not the wound
From young Del Hoyo, is his death ascribed.

DOLORES.

This is the drop too much! My cup, already
Filled to the brim, with bitterness runs o'er!
O Heaven, that I were dead!

DON RAFAEL.

Why die thou shalt.

But not like thine old parents, honest souls!
At peace with man, and filled with dreams of Heaven.
Not like thy gentle rival, fair Angustia,
'Mid loving, weeping, and admiring friends;
Nor yet thy noble husband, at whose couch
When dying stood a king absorbed in grief.
But in the glare of day, before a crowd—
A brutal crowd of gaping, gloating wretches—
Whose hoots and jeers shall drown the shaveling's voice,
Who draws his prayers at thy unheeding ear.
Yet not by headsman's axe, or hangman's cord,
Whose pang is hardly felt till it is o'er.
But in the midst of torments, that in vain
Would words essay description. Think, oh think!
Of the intense, the terrible agony
Of that most beautiful and delicate form,
When swathed in fire, that close and closer wraps it,
As sinews crack and shrivel, till thy life-strings
Snap in the flame, and crumble into ashes!

DOLORES.

O horror! horror! horror! Silence, Heaven!
This devil's voice, or close mine ears against it,
If only by the death he makes so dreadful!

DON RAFAEL.

Now I—and I alone—from this can save thee;
Can give thee length of days, with wealth and honour;
And more,—forgetfulness of all the past.

DOLORES.

Forgetfulness! O wilt thou give me that?
Propound thy terms; from nothing would I shrink
To win that blessed boon, when I no more
Shall reel beneath the memory of my crimes.

VOICE FROM ABOVE.

Sinful soul, on life's rough road
Sinking 'neath a weary load,
On the Lord lay all thy care;
He'll for thee thy burthen bear.

DOLORES.

Who was it spake? I thought we were alone.

DON RAFAEL.

Some monk his office in the passage saying.
We are alone.

DOLORES.

Alas, how vain thy boast !
Till from my soul are washed the stains of guilt,
No power of man can bring forgetfulness.

VOICE FROM ABOVE.

Though thy sins are scarlet red,
Be not thou dishearten'd ;
From Heaven's mercy fountains flow
That shall wash thee white as snow.

DON RAFAEL.

That babbling monk again ! I promise nought
I will not do. But thou dost hear me not.

DOLORES.

I hear. (*Aside.*) O can there yet be hope for me ?

VOICE FROM ABOVE.

Hope of pardon is for all,
Who will timely heed the call
From the Mercy Seat on high,
"Turn to me: why will ye die?"

DOLORES, (*aside.*)

O blessed words !

DON RAFAEL.

Then yield to me thy will,
And iron doors and walls of massive stone
Shall crumble at a breath, and thou walk forth

In perfect freedom, with no shadow resting
Upon thy mind of the distressful past.

DOLORES.

Yield thee my will! What follows then? Wouldst
not
Seek after that the mastery of my soul?

DON RAFAEL.

What care I for thy soul! the feeble breath
That animates the clay, by plastic hand
Of Nature fashioned to that goodly form,
Which, passing from thee, is, perchance, inhaled
By some poor insect, or unsightly beast,
Whose life is lengthened by the loss of thine.
Yield but thy will, and for that thing which thou
Dost call thy soul—do with it as thou wilt.

DOLORES.

Not even to the guilty is the fear
Of Heaven's infinite wrath more terrible
Than the all desolating thought of that
Is hidden in thy words—Annihilation!
O baffled fiend! thou hast o'ershot the mark.
The soul thou wouldst degrade by sophistries,
Now roused, asserts her immortality,
And spurns alike the tempter and his lure.
I know my crimes, and know the punishment

They must receive from man. Yet know I too
 The mercy of the Judge at whose tribunal
 I, with a sinful world, shall one day stand.
 And in that mercy do I trust. Away!
 I set my foot upon the Rock of Ages;
 And though the waves of hell may surge around me,
 They shall not sweep me thence.

[Holds up the Cross she has taken from her bosom.

Thus armed, do I
 To Satan and his cohorts bid defiance,
 And in the name of Him who died hereon,
 I now command thee—leave me! and forever!

[With looks of baffled hatred, he recedes, and finally disappears.

D O L O R E S, *(falling on her knees.)*

Thine, thine the triumph, Heaven. Thine the praise.



S C E N E II.

A street. The doors, windows, and tops of houses crowded with spectators. Many persons hurrying forward. Enter a YOUNG MAN and a YOUNG WOMAN.

Y O U N G M A N .

Here we shall have a good sight of the procession.
 Let us stop.

YOUNG WOMAN.

No, no ; let us get further on. Thou didst promise me a good place, and if thou dost not, thou mayst dance by thyself to-night for me.

YOUNG MAN.

Let us on, then.

[*They pass off.*]

Enter Two THIEVES.

FIRST THIEF.

Get as far forward as thou canst. 'Tis the same as at any other show ;—the richer people are the better places they get ;—the poor only are not allowed to press too closely on the officials. When thou seest them begin to fire the pile, then commence operations.

SECOND THIEF.

Poh ! I'm no novice. 'Tisn't the first execution I've attended.

[*They pass off.*]

Enter a feeble OLD MAN, and an OLD WOMAN carrying a sickly INFANT.

OLD WOMAN.

I'm glad, neighbour, to see thee out again. Thou hast been long ill.

OLD MAN.

For two months I've not been as far as the church ;

and nothing less than an occasion like this could ha' brought me out o' doors.

OLD WOMAN.

And nothing but to gratify this poor child, that has so little to amuse it at home, would have brought me abroad to-day.

[*They pass off.*]

Enter MIGUEL, LOPE and JUANA.

JUANA.

Here, let us ensconce ourselves in this corner, where we shall be out of the way of the crowd.

MIGUEL.

Poor soul! though she has brought death and ruin to all I loved best on earth, I cannot but feel sorry to see one so young and beautiful condemned to a death so horrible!

JUANA.

Sorry, indeed! For my part, I think burning a great deal too good for her. And as for her youth and beauty, she has very little, at present, left of either, I warrant you; for 'tis well known, since they drove the devil out of her in the Inquisition, that she has sunk down into an ugly old woman.

LOPE.

Was there ever a story told against one woman that would be found too monstrous for another to believe?

Yet I did not think that even thy capacious throat could swallow such a bouncer as that.

JUANA.

The throat that has been able to swallow all the marvels thou hast been stuffing down it for years, might now gulp any thing, I should think. But hush! The procession is coming.

LOPE.

Hush, indeed! Why, there's been no one talking this half hour, but thyself.

Enter SEBASTIAN.

SEBASTIAN.

A fascination I cannot resist
Has drawn me to this spot; and while I shrink
With horror at the thought of what attracts
This rabble rout, I own its influence,
And yield me to it like the rest. O Heaven!
How full of contradictions is man's nature,
That even finds pleasure in the thing it loathes.

Enter PROCESSION.

CHORUS OF PRIESTS.

Terribly the wrath of Heaven
Burns against the unforgiven!
Nations see it, and with fear
Withering are away.

But before the throne—unheeding
 Frown of Justice—Mercy pleading,
 Wins at last the King to hear,
 And doth his vengeance stay.
 Cry we, then, as crieth she,
 “*Miserere Domine!*”

[*The priests pass off*]

Enter DOLORÉS, guarded.

JUANA.

Well, though she is certainly changed for the worse,
 I don't see that she looks so much like a witch, after all.

LOPE.

If thou wouldst only keep thy tongue still, the world
 would not so soon find out what a fool thou art.

JUANA.

And whether thou speakest or not, the world can't
 help knowing thou art a brute.

MIGUEL.

Cease this unseemly wrangling. If we cannot sympa-
 thize with human suffering, let us at least regard it with
 respectful silence.

SEBASTIAN.

Alas, how is she changed! The haughty step,
 The air of pride are gone; and the brave spirit,
 Revealed in flashes from those glorious orbs,

Now veiled by their lids, is crushed beneath
 The iron weight of crime. A mortal paleness
 Is on the cheek where late in beauty glowed
 Th' imperial rose. She falters;—reels;—she will
 Fall to the earth! O no, while I have strength,
 She shall not want for aid.

[Hurries to her assistance.

DOLORES.

Thanks, dear Sebastian.

O this is brave! A less courageous spirit
 Had never dared, before this multitude,
 Own sympathy for one of my condition—
 Of fallen wretches most abhorred by man—
 A murderess! Support me for a moment.
 The executioner will soon relieve thee
 Of thy most painful service. Death has lost
 Much of its bitterness, since thou hast proved
 I am not all forsaken. Heaven is good!

[Lays her head on his bosom.

OFFICER FROM THE FRONT.

Urge on the prisoner.

SEBASTIAN.

For charity!

A moment give her. See ye not she faints?
 O would that Heaven, in pity for her woes,

Ne'er more these eyes would suffer to uncloze,
But, from the breast that pillows this dear head,
Call home her spirit. It is done! SHE'S DEAD.

[He lays the body reverently down, and kneels by the side of it.

*A strain of delicious music is heard, when the scene changes,
and, instead of the spectators, a group of glorified spirits
appears above them in the air, among whom are DIEGO,
LEANDRA, DON LUIS and DONNA ANGUSTIA.*

CURTAIN FALLS.

Better Late than Never.

An Attempt at Comedy.

CHARACTERS.



ALLSIDES, *a Merchant.*

SCRAPE, *a Money-Lender.*

SIR BRYAN O'FALLON, *an Irish Baronet.*

WINDFALL, *an Actor.*

TAG,

RAG,

BOBTAIL,

} *Political Leaders.*

SERVANT.

MRS. ALLSIDES.

HESTER ALLSIDES.

ADELE ST. MAUR.

SCENE.—*New York.* TIME.—*Middle of the Nineteenth Century*

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.

ACT I.

SCENE I

A room in the Astor. WINDFALL alone. He walks up and down, and appears to read, but suddenly stopping, closes the book.

WINDFALL.

ALL, all in vain do I invoke the aid
Of others' thoughts to rid me of mine own;—
They will not hence! I feel my isolation
More in the city of my birth than e'er
When late a wanderer; and memory,
Reminding me of my neglected childhood,
And the injustice that my boyhood suffered,
Peoples my brain with thoughts so saddening,
That, but for the wild longing of my heart
For vengeance on the cowardly oppressor,
I could forget the part I'm now to play—
Of man—and, like a child, sit down and weep.

Since the dark night that from the house I stole
 Which ne'er had been a home to the dependent,
 I have not been so utterly cast down
 As on this morn, that with such cheering smile
 Looks in upon me. I will try the air.

[*As he is going, enter SIR BRYAN O'FALLON.*

SIR BRYAN.

Well, as I see you're in, you are not out,
 Though out you should be on a morn like this,
 When all the world is keeping holiday.
 The voice of summer is upon the breeze,
 And every flower that showed its face in June—
 Which is the May that poets rhyme about—
 Is at this blessed moment in Broadway,
 Which seems one grand parterre.

WINDFALL.

A moving one.

SIR BRYAN.

Of course. Why not? And we should move to meet it,
 And revel in its sweets, like humming-birds,
 Or bumble-bees, or some such happy creatures.
 But how is this? The spirit, that last night
 Was light and brilliant as the bubbles floating
 Upon the bosom of the sparkling cup,
 Which filled our hearts and brains with ecstasy,

Is now as flat as table-beer long drawn.

Why, what's the matter ?

WINDFALL.

Faith, I cannot tell.

I should be well, not having any ailment ;

And, being without sorrow, should be merry.

And yet I scarce am well, and am most sad.

Some memory of the past hangs round my heart,

Like stone upon the neck of drowning wretch,

And, struggle as I will, drags down my spirit

Into the depths of cold despondency !

SIR BRYAN.

Why, man, what humour's this ? Are you in love ?

WINDFALL.

SIR BRYAN.

Not in love ? Perhaps you are in debt ?

WINDFALL.

Nor yet in debt ; for I have still contrived,

Whate'er my means, never to step beyond them.

SIR BRYAN.

Well, why a man who's not in love or debt,

With youth, and health, and hope upon his side,

And blessed with appetite and good digestion,

Should suffer sadness on a morn like this
Is more than my philosophy can fathom.
I do not ask your confidence ; for though
We've eaten, drunk, and smoked a month together,
I do not feel that justly I can claim it.
But if you would that I prescribe for you,
'Tis only right to let me know your case,
And, that you may know something of the person
Who is to be your doctor, I will give you
The outlines of a story, that has had
But few events to make it interesting.
I need not tell you of my ancestors,
Who, from the days of Noah, or, perhaps,
Of father Adam, till th' accurs'd invasion,
Were kings in Erin. But, alas ! alas !
From the black day the Saxon set his foot
Upon the soil our holy saint had blessed,
They sank by slow degrees from princely sway,
And princely rank, until my honoured father
Beheld himself as poor a gentleman
As ever claimed descent from royalty.
About two years ago, 'twas my mishap
To find myself successor to a title,
That scarce had as much land for its support
As would be thought a decent farm in Jersey.
What could I do ? To live in idleness,
Upon the pittance wrung from my poor tenants,

I felt to be unworthy of my youth;
 And, if I'd had the wish, had not the means
 To push my fortunes in my native land.
 So, gathering up what ready cash I could,
 The sun's bright course I followed o'er the sea,
 And here I am, with purpose firm to win,
 In some pursuit I shall not blush to name—
 Though what I know not—honest independence.
 But come; the golden hours are flying from us
 While I stand prosing here. At our next leisure,
 You shall relate to me whate'er you please
 Of your own history. I have now to pay
 A debt long due, for which I need your aid.
 Don't be alarmed;—'tis but a morning call
 On some old friends whom I have known—these six
 weeks.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A room in the house of ALLSIDES. ALLSIDES seated at a table covered with newspapers.

ALLSIDES, (*laying down the paper he has been reading.*)
 I will to Congress. In the narrow sphere,
 To which 'till now I have condemned myself,
 My powers have sadly wanted room for action.
 But in the great arena, where men meet

To signalize themselves, if not in deeds,
 In words of high emprise, my energies
 Will have full scope ; and all the honours gained,
 By our time-honoured house, shall be as nothing
 To the new glories of the name of Allsides,
 Won by my eloquence. I will to Congress.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

A person wants to see you, sir.

ALLSIDES.

What kind of person ? Is't a gentleman ?

SERVANT.

Can't say, sir. Don't look much like one, though.
 Not very well dressed, sir, and a pertikler red nose.

ALLSIDES.

A red nose, say you ? Well, that is no sign
 He's not a gentleman. But show him in.

[Exit SERVANT.

Enter TAG.

ALLSIDES.

My dear friend Tag, I am rejoiced to see you !

TAG.

Knowed you would be. But you'll be more so, I'm
 a thinkin', when you know my arrant.

ALLSIDES.

Whate'er your errand, I receive your visit
With unfeigned pleasure. Pray be seated, sir.

TAG.

Thank you, no. Some friends of ourn—the “Anti-Crotonians,” you know, held a sort o’ perlimerary meetin’ last night, at the “Friend and Pitcher,” and it were anonymously resolved, to have your name sent into the nomernating committee as our candidate for Congress.

ALLSIDES.

O my dear friend! to you I am indebted
For this kind service. But you must be thirsty.
Will you not taste a drop of my Otard?
You will not find it bad.

[Brings brandy and helps TAG.]

TAG.

Well, as my coppers *is* a little hot this mornin’, I don’t care if I do (*drinks*). Now, that’s what I call *good!* As I said, you am to have the nomernation;—but only on sartin conditions.

ALLSIDES.

Whate'er they are, I pledge myself at once
To yield to them a prompt and strict compliance.

TAG.

Well, these they be.

*[Takes a paper from his pocket, and reads.**First.* You must go agin all monoperlies.

ALLSIDES.

Most cheerfully.

TAG.

Secondly. You shall insist that every thing is to be in common.

ALLSIDES.

Which is but right.

TAG.

Thirdly. You a'n't to allow no man to set up a carriage.

ALLSIDES.

No, indeed. Why should he ?

TAG.

Fourthly. All omnibuses, rail-cars, and steamboats must be run at public expense, and nothin' be axed for passage no where, and liquor and segars be given free gratis for nothin' to everybody besides.

ALLSIDES.

Most assuredly.

TAG.

Fifthly. You a'n't to let no man have two coats and

an extry pair o' pants or boots, when another man ha'n't got nyther.

ALLSIDES.

Certainly not.

TAG.

Sixthly. You must see that the theatres am open every hour of the day and night, for the 'commerdation of us, the people, and no manager sha'n't have the right to charge nothin' for admission.

ALLSIDES.

That they shall not, the vagabonds!

TAG.

Seventhly. You must have the right of universal suffering granted to every man, woman, and child that has breathed the free air of our blessed country, for the space of four-and-twenty hours.

ALLSIDES.

Why should they not?

TAG.

And *Eighthly* and *lastly.* You must go for a grand eduction of all salaries. If I kin live on a dollar a day, when I get it, why shouldn't the President of these United States? And if a custom-house night-watch a'n't worth more than five hundred a year, why should the Collector of the Port, who very often a'n't so smart

a feller, be allowed to make his fifteen thousand? Nyther of these chaps, I take it, wants any thing more to eat or drink than I do. Speaking of that, as my whistle is rayther dry this mornin', I don't mind if I try a little more of your brandy.

[Helps himself, and drinks.

ALLSIDES.

The liberal measures that you have proposed
For my support and ardent advocacy,
Are just the ones I should myself have named,
Had I been called on by the people's voice
To give expression to my sentiments.

TAG (*shaking him by the hand*).

You'm the man for our money.

ALLSIDES.

You ne'er shall find me wanting in my duty.

TAG.

We all know that. Adoo.

ALLSIDES.

Good morning, sir.

[As TAG turns to go out, RAG enters. They pass one another with looks of hatred and defiance. Exit TAG.

ALLSIDES.

Most worthy friend, you're welcome heartily.

RAG.

I don't know that, till I learn what that fellow has been doing here.

ALLSIDES.

What, Tag? Poor fellow! Why there is between us
A small account, that's been for some time standing,
And he was here to beg a few days' grace.

RAG.

The graceless scamp! what right has he to grace? I
wouldn't give him a moment. Ah, Mr. Allsides, times
are sadly changed.

ALLSIDES.

They are indeed!

RAG.

A few years ago, if a chap like that owed any thing
to an honest man, like us, he'd have been thrown into
gaol, and left there to rot, if the money wasn't forth-
coming. But now, sir, your debtor passes you in the
street with the swagger of a new made M. P. Ah, sir,
I fear those good old times are gone forever!

ALLSIDES.

Truly, I fear they are.

RAG.

Well, well! But that is neither here nor there; so
I'll at once to the business that I came upon.

ALLSIDES.

But will you not take some refreshment first?

RAG.

Pardon me, I cannot think of drinking before dinner. No gentleman—no matter how much he may indulge afterwards—ever does that. 'Tis contrary to established order. Speaking of order, I have come to inform you, that the "Friends of Order," all good men upon 'Change, who meet six times a week at the "Day Book and Ledger," to discuss the evils of the times, and the means of their speedy remedy, decided at our meeting last night, to send your name in to the Committee, as our candidate for the new Congressional District.

ALLSIDES.

My dear, dear sir.

RAG.

But first I am to propound a few questions, to which you are to return unequivocal and categorical answers.

ALLSIDES.

Most certainly I will.

RAG.

Are you a friend to Order?

ALLSIDES.

Can you doubt it?

RAG.

Opposed to all the levelling tendencies of the day?
 particularly the elevation of the masses in the social
 scale?

ALLSIDES.

Beyond all question.

RAG.

Are you for making the rich richer, and the poor-
 poorer by wise and judicious legislation?

ALLSIDES.

Who among us is not?

RAG.

Are you in favour of granting perpetual charters to
 all banks, so as to make this nation, in a monetary
 sense, one entire PLAINFIELD?

ALLSIDES.

It is the measure I would first propose.

RAG.

But, above all, will you support the *gallows*?

ALLSIDES.

Yes, as the greatest blessing of our laws.

RAG.

You are the man we want; and so will I report you
 to our friends.

ALLSIDES.

Sir, I am honoured by your approbation.

[*They shake hands. Exit RAG.*]

Enter BOBTAIL.

BOBTAIL (*loftily*).

Mr. Allsides, I presume ?

ALLSIDES.

That is my name, sir.

BOBTAIL.

And mine is Bobtail. You may have heard of me.

ALLSIDES.

I have, indeed ; and proud am I to know you.

[*Giving his hand.*]

But pray be seated.

BOBTAIL.

I thank you, sir. I've come upon a business that can as well be done standing. I am a committee of one, sir, from "The Improved Order of Aboriginal Brothers," who are determined to make themselves heard in the legislative halls of the country, and am come to confer upon you, sir, the high honour of becoming our mouth-piece in Congress.

ALLSIDES.

You overwhelm me with the obligation.

BOBTAIL.

But before we entrust our interests to you, sir, it is necessary that you accede to certain proposals which I have to make.

ALLSIDES.

Whate'er you please.

BOBTAIL.

You shall bring in bills to prohibit all importations from abroad.

ALLSIDES.

I'll make it treason, sir, to wear a coat
That's not of home production.

BOBTAIL.

To prevent the running of the mails upon the sabbath.

ALLSIDES.

Yes, and females too.

BOBTAIL.

To discountenance all religions—

ALLSIDES.

O, I'm down on all religions.

BOBTAIL.

Except one.

ALLSIDES.

Of course, except one.

BOBTAIL.

And that shall be supported by the state.

ALLSIDES.

Certainly, by the state.

BOBTAIL.

To shut up all the playhouses, and send the actors, with all other vagrants, to work at the tunnel which is to form a communication between New York and Canton.

ALLSIDES.

It shall be done.

BOBTAIL.

To make it penal to drink any champagne—that is not made in Jersey.

ALLSIDES.

I'll make it capital. The punishment shall not be less than death. Will that suffice?

BOBTAIL.

One thing more, and I am done. You shall have an act passed, authorizing the President to raise a dyke the whole extent of our seaboard, which shall forever prevent the inundation of our beloved country by foreigners.

ALLSIDES.

I will have one thrown up that shall o'ertop The Rocky Mountains. Can I do aught else?

BOBTAIL.

Nothing, I believe, sir, and so I bid you a very good morning.

ALLSIDES.

Good morning, my dear friend.

[*Exit* BOBTAIL.]ALLSIDES (*alone*).

O this is rapturous! my fondest dream
 Shall now be realized! By means of these
 Shall I at once ascend the glittering height—
 Which thousands have in vain essayed to reach—
 Where sits enthroned the goddess of my worship—
 Immortal Fame! Who'd not be prodigal
 Of promises, which are but breath—no more—
 When they can purchase all that heart requires
 To make it blest?

Enter MRS. ALLSIDES.

Ah, now for the old story.

A dress is wanted, or a shawl, or bonnet,
 Of the last style, and I, of course, must pay for't.
 You here, my dear?

MRS. ALLSIDES.

I hope you see I am.

ALLSIDES.

And if I did not, I should doubtless hear it.

MRS. ALLSIDES.

Did you mean that for wit? Of course you did.
 It is the name that men are wont to give
 To all ill-natured sayings. But, my dear,
 Things of that kind are thrown away on me.
 I am wit-proof. But to my errand. I,
 To please the girls, have sent out half a thousand,
 Or so, of invitations, for a party
 I give to-night; and on your way to 'Change,
 I wish you would a moment stop at Downing's,
 And say, besides the things already ordered,
 He must send up what I have here set down.

[Gives a paper.

'Tis the first *Soirée* of the season, and,
 If cost can make it such, shall be the finest.

ALLSIDES.

Cost, madam? cost? Who is to meet this cost?

MRS. ALLSIDES.

You, to be sure.

ALLSIDES.

But how? I ask you, how?

MRS. ALLSIDES.

By money, certainly.

ALLSIDES.

O yes, by money.

But have you thought where that is to be got?

MRS. ALLSIDES.

In Wall street, is it not? At least I've heard so.

ALLSIDES.

I'm not disposed to say unpleasant things,
But hang me, madam, if I ever knew
One of your sense speak quite so like a fool.

MRS. ALLSIDES.

Now don't be rude, my dear good man. 'Tis vulgar;
And quite unsuited to your style of features;
And, more than that, with me it counts for nothing.
But do as I desire, and you to-night
Shall hear your taste commended in the choice
You made of wife.

[ALLSIDES passes into another room.

Why, what's the matter here?

Enter WINDFALL, bearing HESTER and followed by SIR BRYAN and ADELE.

MRS. ALLSIDES.

Good heaven! what has happened?

WINDFALL (*laying HESTER on a sofa*).

Nothing serious.

The lady has been frightened;—nothing more.

SIR BRYAN.

Almost run over, and as nearly killed ;
 But not being quite run over, was not hurt ;
 And fainted when she found herself uninjured.
 A thing that often happens.

ADELE.

She revives.

Dear Hetty, are you better ?

HESTER (*rising*).

No—but well.

I've not been ill, my dear. 'Twas but a *ruse*
 To draw attention. Nothing but a sham.

[*Seeing* WINDFALL.

I beg your pardon, sir. I did not see
 That we had company. O yes, I remember,
 You saved me from the unromantic death,
 Of being crushed between two omnibuses,
 And at no trifling risk, for which I thank you.
 How shocking 'twould be t' have twelve citizens,
 Called from the street, to sit upon the body
 Of Hester Allsides, the incomparable !

MRS. ALLSIDES.

You giddy creature, cannot this mishap
 Tame your wild spirit ?

[*To* WINDFALL.

Sir, accept the thanks
Of one who, but for you, might now be childless.

WINDFALL.

Dear madam, I—(*starts*)—Good heaven!

SIR BRYAN.

What's the matter?

Have you been hurt?

HESTER (*earnestly*).

Indeed, indeed, I hope not.

WINDFALL.

Be not alarmed—a momentary twinge.

SIR BRYAN (*aside to WINDFALL*).

About the region of the heart?

WINDFALL.

'Tis over.

I have done nothing to deserve your thanks,
But am most happy to have been the means
Of saving, from, perhaps, a fatal injury,
One, whose untimely loss must fill with gloom
The hearts of thousands.

HESTER (*laughing*).

Why not say at once,
Of all the nations?—clothe the world in black,
And quite extinguish sun, and moon, and stars?

SIR BRYAN.

And so it would.

HESTER.

O, sir, I ery you merey!
I quite o'erlooked your presence.

SIR BRYAN.

Flattering, faith!
But then the fault was none of yours, fair lady,
But my own modesty.

HESTER.

Which, like the veil
Of Broadway belle, most gracefully conceals
What else would mar the beauties it exposes.

[Aside to him.]

We may suppose your friend has got a name
By which he's sometimes known. Is it a secret?

SIR BRYAN.

I beg your pardon, ladies. I'd forgotten
My friend was not already known to you.
Allow me to present you Mr. Windfall.

MRS. ALLSIDES.

Sir, though the circumstance cannot be called
A pleasant one that made us first acquainted,
Yet must it ever be by me remembered
With that delight which springs from gratitude.

We are to have a few friends here to-night—
 Sir Bryan's of the number—may I hope
 You will make one among them ?

WINDFALL (*with hesitation*).

Madam—I—

SIR BRYAN.

Of course he will. He can have no engagement—
 At least he can have none may not be broken
 At your desire.

HESTER.

It will oblige us much,
 If you'll drop in a moment, to inquire
 How fares your patient.

WINDFALL.

I'll not fail to do so.
 Sir Bryan, come. We have already trespassed
 Too long upon these ladies.

SIR BRYAN.

Faith, that's true.
 Yet could I find it in my heart to trespass
 A little longer, but you see, I'm forced
 To tear myself away.

[*Exeunt* SIR BRYAN and WINDFALL.]

MRS. ALLSIDES (*slowly crossing the room*).

I'm sadly puzzled.

I know the face of that young gentleman,
 But where I've seen it, if not in my dreams,
 Am at a loss to tell: and yet it seems
 Almost familiar to me as my own.

[*Exit.*

ADELE (*musingly*).

And so it seems to me; although I'm sure
 I never could have seen it 'till to-day.
 I had a brother once—or think I had,
 For I am oft in doubt if memory
 Or fancy have the better claim to him;
 And sometimes, when I shut my eyes, I see
 A face that should be his, but, till this hour,
 Have never seen in mortal man its like.

[*After a pause; to HESTER, who has taken a book, and
 appears to read.*

What think you, Hetty, of this stranger?

HESTER.

I?

I did not note him.

ADELE.

Did you not? (*Aside.*) I'll see.
 You did as well, my dear. There is not much
 In him to note. With rather a mean figure—

HESTER.

Nay, my dear Dell, I did observe his figure,
 And thought it a right good one.

ADELE.

Then his features
Are very plain.

HESTER.

To me they did not seem so.

ADELE.

And in his eyes I fancied some defect.

HESTER.

Why how you talk! Whatever the defect
In eyes, 'twas in your own. Than his, I'm sure
I ne'er saw finer.

ADELE (*laughing*).

Truly, dear, for one
Who "did not note him," you are wondrous well
Informed of his perfections. Silly ostrich!
Didst think, because thy head was in the sand,
That all of thee was hidden? or couldst think,
After a school-companionship of years,
It would be easy to impose on me?
I saw you "note him," and, what's more, I saw
That every note was one of admiration.

HESTER (*with affected anger*).

You saucy puss! I'm very much inclined
To box your ears.

ADELE.

Well, I'll not baulk your humour.
And though my ears may tingle, that will not
Take from my eyes the power that most you fear,
And do not doubt that they will "note" you well.

HESTER (*running out*).

I'll not stay with you.

ADELE.

Nay, you can't avoid me.

[*Following, is met by SCRAPE.*]

SCRAPE.

I beg your pardon, miss, I thought to find
Your father here.

ADELE.

If you mean Mr. Allsides—

SCRAPE.

He's not your father; no, you're Miss St. Maur.

ADELE.

You seem to know me, sir,

SCRAPE.

Know you, my child?

I do; and better than you know yourself.

ADELE.

You knew my parents, then? O, tell me of them!
In my long orphanage, I've never met

One who could satisfy my heart's deep yearning
For knowledge of those dear ones. Did you know
them ?

SCRAPE.

I knew them.

ADELE.

Be not chary of your words,
But tell me every thing you knew of them.

SCRAPE.

That could I hardly, in a morning call.
But know, your mother was an angel, and
Your father, though he might have ill-deserved,
Was one whom all the world conspired to treat
Even worse than his deservings, 'till his life,
When she was gone, whose presence was his peace,
Became a daily warfare.

ADELE.

And he died
At enmity with all! O piteous end!

SCRAPE.

Who told you that he died ?

ADELE.

I cannot tell.
No one, I think. But surely, if not dead,

He'd not so long have left his child in doubt
Of his existence.

SCRAPE.

Have you known neglect,
More than if reared beside that father's hearth?

ADELE.

Except the want of kindred, I have known
No other want; for the dear nuns, with whom
My childhood and my girlhood have been passed,
Ne'er failed in kindness to me. But their kindness
Could never fill the void left in my heart
By absence of the love that should have dwelt there.
O tell me, do you *know* my father lives?

SCRAPE.

I do.

ADELE.

O blessings on you for that answer!
For though we ne'er should meet on this side heaven,
The feeling that there still is on the earth
A being to whose love I have a right,
Will be a drop of honey in the cup,
That else had been too bitter. Bless, O bless you!

SCRAPE.

Well, then, since grateful for so small a boon,
I will unto the favour add, by saying,

Not only does your father live, but soon
Will come to claim a daughter's love and duty.

ADELE.

And joyfully the claim shall be admitted.

SCRAPE.

But tell me, how like you this family ?
The daughter is your friend ?

ADELE.

My earliest friend.

In childhood placed together at one school,
And sharing thence each other's tasks and pleasures,
Like children of one home did we grow up ;
And since have been as sisters. By her wish
Have I become an inmate of this house.

SCRAPE.

With welcome from her parents ?

ADELE.

Without that,
Not even my love for her could keep me here.
The morsel that was grudged I could not swallow.

SCRAPE.

That's right ; for there is nothing half so bitter,
As bread received from an unwilling hand.
So you are here a guest, not a dependent ?

ADELE.

Dependent, sir! while youth and health are mine?
 O no! there's too much of my country in me
 To live a pensioner on others' bounty.
 And though to toil a stranger, it is something
 I do not fear, but must forever shrink
 From that base thing—dependence.

SCRAPE.

Bravely spoken.

I see you have inherited the spirit
 Of her whose face your own so much resembles.
 O may the earthly blessings that by her
 Were merited fall to her daughter's share.

ADELE.

You are most kind, sir, but I keep you standing.
 Would you see Mr. Allsides?

SCRAPE.

If you please.

Yet, stay a moment. As I entered now,
 I met two dashing youths. Whom do they visit?

ADELE.

Whom should they visit? I'm a stranger here.

SCRAPE.

That's very true; and it may be as well
 Such to remain. The young men of this city

Are not the best acquaintances for one
Like you, unfriended. Guard yourself, my girl.

ADELE.

Who visit here are gentlemen.

SCRAPE.

Ay, ay.

The world so calls them, and, in courtesy,
So must we too. And yet I doubt me much,
If any of this family know aught
Of either of these *gentlemen*. No matter.
Pray send me Mr. Allsides.

ADELE.

Instantly.

[*Exit.*

SCRAPE.

I now have all I wished. His scattered notes
Have all been gathered, and are in my hand,
And, light as they may seem, they will be found
Of weight to crush him into nothingness.
And he shall feel it. But he comes.

Enter ALLSIDES

ALLSIDES.

Ah, Scrape,

It is an unexpected pleasure, truly.
To see you here.

SCRAPE.

I hope you'll think't a pleasure,
When you have heard my errand.

ALLSIDES.

Doubt it not.
And yet I hope nought serious has happened.
But no. Perhaps you have not yet been able
To raise the little sum I asked last night?
If so, I shall indeed feel disappointed;
But even then, right glad to see you here.

SCRAPE.

That *little* sum—if such you call three thousand—
Can not be raised. Nay, more, some other sums—
All little sums of some few thousands each,
Yet making, in the whole, a trifle more
Than twenty thousand—must be paid to-day,
Or with to-morrow's sun you rise disgraced.

ALLSIDES.

Good Heaven! what can you mean?

SCRAPE.

Why simply this:
Within the last few months you've signed your name
To some half-score of papers, which, like kites,
You cast upon the wind, and let them fly,
Without a thought of what might be their fate.

But I, as you shall see, have had more care
For these poor scatterlings, and took them home,
Where they lie snug. In short, you are my debtor
In the amount that you find here set down.

[*Giving a paper.*]

Of which I now demand immediate payment.

ALLSIDES.

To-morrow, Scrape, to-morrow.

SCRAPE.

No, to-day.

ALLSIDES.

But, my dear Scrape!

SCRAPE.

You plead to little purpose.

If by to-night this money is not paid,

To-morrow you are bankrupt.

[*Exit.*]

ALLSIDES.

Then I'm lost.

[*Throws himself on a sofa.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A room in the Astor. WINDFALL and SIR BRYAN O'FALLON.

WINDFALL.

WHY did you take me to that house?

SIR BRYAN.

What house?

For sure I took you to a dozen houses.

WINDFALL.

To Allsides'.

SIR BRYAN.

That? It is the pleasantest
In all the city. And such charming girls
I have not met since I and Erin parted.
She is an angel! and my sole regret
Is that I am not rich, for her dear sake!

WINDFALL.

Whom do you speak of?

SIR BRYAN.

Of whom should I speak,
But Miss St. Maur—the beautiful Adele?

WINDFALL.

Though pretty, certainly, with pleasing manners,
And a most charming voice, I do not think her
At all to be compared to her fair friend.

SIR BYRAN.

Bah! you've no taste in beauty, that is plain.

WINDFALL.

Not much, perhaps; but, little as I have,
I would 'twere less, although the power of beauty
I hardly knew 'till now;—'till now ne'er gave
My heart up wholly to its influence.
I wish I had not seen Miss Allsides, who,
Of all the women I have e'er beheld,
In form, in face, complexion, voice, and spirit,
Is sole possessor of th' ideal beauty
To which my soul has secret homage paid
From boyhood; yet is she the only one
I must not love.

SIR BRYAN.

And why?

WINDFALL.

She is my foe.

SIR BRYAN.

O, to your peace, of course. I know your meaning.

WINDFALL.

Not quite. But when you have my story heard,
You'll know it better. Many years ago,
My father was a merchant of this place,
And at one time thought wealthy. But reverses,
Unsparing as the tempest in its fury,
Did on a sudden, scatter all his gains,
And leave him penniless; when, with the hope
Of bettering his fortunes, with my mother
And little sister, he went to the south,
And never more was heard of. Me he left
Behind him, to the care of one whose friendship
He prized beyond the wealth which he had lost;
Who pledged the sacred honour of a man,
To rear me as his own. I have not patience
To tell you how his word was kept! Suffice it,
The meanest servant in his princely mansion
Than I fared better. There was no neglect,
And no indignity a child could suffer,
To which I was not by that man exposed,
Until I felt that any change must be
For me a blessing, and I fled the home
My father had provided, one to seek
With strangers.

SIR BRYAN.

And that man was Allsides?

WINDFALL.

Yes.

SIR BRYAN.

A heartless wretch! But surely 'tis no fault
Of the poor girl's that she has such a father.
And, though you may be right in hating him,
I cannot see why she should be your foe.
I interrupt your story. Did you find
The world to be more kind than him you left?

WINDFALL.

Not much. But I had on the world no claim
For special kindness. My poor father had not
Committed me unto its care;—had not
Received its promise that I should be favoured
More than another;—and I had no right
To quarrel with it when it used me ill.
And yet the world is not so bad, Sir Bryan,
As many do report. I have found friends
Where one would hardly think to look for them.
Once, when a starveling in the streets, and shunned
By Priest and Levite, a Samaritan—
Despised of both—took home the outcast boy,
And healed the wounds that rankled in his heart.
That man was a poor player.

SIR BRYAN.

Do you know,

I've sometimes thought to try the stage myself,
 If all things else should fail me? On the bills,
 In staring capitals, to put my name
 And title at full length would draw the million,
 To look upon a living Baronet,
 Who would, for their amusement—and their money—
 Perform strange antics, dance perhaps, or sing
 A merry stave like this.

SONG.—SIR BRYAN.

The ills of this life, had enough heaven knows!
 Are always made worse by one's fancy;
 And he that's been jilted by Bess or by Nell,
 Will swear there is no truth in Nancy.
 For me, I'm resolved to take things as they come,
 The only true wisdom in nature,
 And strengthen my heart when philosophy fails,
 By taking a drop of the crature.

I know it is hard when in love or in debt,
 To look upon life as a frolic;
 And know it is hard for a mortal to sing,
 When racked with the gout or the colic.
 But what will you gain by a whimper or groan,
 Or ugly distortion of fature?
 Believe me, not half of the comfort you'll find
 In taking a drop of the crature.

Would not that *tell*, sir? But I beg your pardon.
 You spake of a poor player.

WINDFALL.

Poor, indeed,

In this world's goods, but rich in generous feeling.
He fed and clothed, and educated me,
As far as he had means; and when I rose
To man's estate, and chose for my profession
The same which he had by his life ennobled;
To his advice, far more than my deservings,
Was I indebted for the great success
That crowned my efforts. I have since won wealth,
And fame—which is to me above all wealth—
From my own generous fellow-citizens,
But the approval of that one kind heart
Outweighed all else. But this is not the theme
I meant to speak on. Hester Allsides is
The sweet ideal of my dreaming youth;
And yet I dare not love her.

SIR BRYAN.

Tut! what folly!
To love a maid most worthy of your love;
Who might be had for asking, we'll suppose;
And yet, because her father wronged you once,
To do a violence to your own heart,
And her deservings, out of hate to him,
Is little else than madness. List to me.
The father of this girl, I dare say, now
Would scarce remember him, who at his board
Sat in the place a son of his might fill,

Yet did not find the kindness of a son.
But then, your name?

WINDFALL.

That would renew no thought
Of what is past. The one I bear is not
That of my childhood.

SIR BRYAN.

Excellent, in faith!
Then go with me. Make love to the fair Hester;
And marry her. And when she is your wife,
Revenge yourself upon the old curmudgeon,
By telling him, the boy he foully wronged,
When in his power, is now his son-in-law.

WINDFALL.

But Hester's happiness?

SIR BRYAN.

Is not endangered.
The secret will be known but to her father,
And he, for his own sake, will not reveal it.

WINDFALL.

I'll think of this advice, which Love and Hate
Both counsel me to follow. Whether Honour
Would join his voice to theirs, I've yet to learn.

SIR BRYAN.

You do not think that I would do an act
Would bear a question in the Court of Honour?

WINDFALL.

Indeed I do not.

SIR BRYAN.

Then what I would not,
Another should not do by my advice.
Allons. We'll let the matter rest at present,
And go prepare ourselves for this night's pleasure.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

HESTER'S room. HESTER and ADELE.

HESTER.

Now truly, Dell, didst ever think of marriage?

ADELE.

Why, what a question!

HESTER.

Is it not a fair one?

I would not ask what you might think it wrong
To answer. But you've thought of it sometimes?

ADELE.

Perhaps—I have.

HESTER.

O then I know you have.
 There's no "perhaps" about it. Be advised
 By one who's had experience of the world
 Full six months more than you. Give it no place
 Henceforth forever in your mind, my girl.
 It is a dangerous thing for a young maid
 To dwell upon. There is no marriage, dear,
 Without a husband: husbands must be men;
 And men are horrid creatures. Their least faults
 Are monstrous. Every way they wrong their wives.
 Thwart and torment them through their waking hours,
 And break their sleep with—snoring. When again
 The thought obtrudes itself, remember this:
 That bad as't may be to lead apes below,
 'Tis better than be led by apes on earth,
 And bid it leave you. But you do not heed me.

ADELE.

Indeed I do, and wonder at your humour.
 Why, what's amiss? Have you against the man
 Who saved your life this morning heard aught ill?

HESTER.

I have heard nothing of him, and I care not
 If more I never hear. And yet I think,
 It would have been but courteous, had he sent
 To know if from my fright I was recovered,

Or whether from the accident I had
Received an injury.

ADELE.

Though you assured him
You were not hurt. You are unreasonable.
I'm sure Sir Bryan—

HESTER (*sharply*).

Dell, I do believe
You think but of Sir Bryan; and I fear
You are ambitious, and would be a lady.

ADELE (*gravely*).

Ambition stimulates to something higher
Than that we are. I am a lady now.

HESTER.

Plague on your petulance! I know you are.
Nay, more—a queen—an empress. Greater still,
My own spoiled darling Dell. But what I mean,
Is not that you would be a lady, but
My Lady—or the Lady of Sir Bryan.

ADELE.

I would be angry, Hetty, but I know
There's no offence intended. I've no hope—
No thought, I mean—that I shall ever be
Sir Bryan's wife. But if I had such thought—
Or hope, as by your smile you think I mean—
It would not be his title that inspired it,

But simply, that I think him worthy all
 Which can be given him by a trusting heart,
 Though he had not that title, which to me,
 And every woman born on this free soil,
 Where worth alone confers nobility,
 Is nothing more than tie of his cravat,
 That, though it may become, is no part of him.
 Were he plain Mister—

HESTER.

You would be content
 To be plain Mistress as his wife, nor sigh
 For the poor title of "My Lady." Well,
 You think not like my worthy father, who,
 With all his talk about equality,
 A holy reverence has for foreign titles,
 And, even beyond a seat in Congress, covets
 The honour that Sir Bryan might confer
 Upon his name, by making me his wife.
 Why does your colour come and go so fast?
 Dost fear in me a rival? Be at rest.
 I told you of my father's wish, not mine.
 Were he a king, I would not wed Sir Bryan.
 Why? you would ask. Because I do not love him.

ADELE.

And yet—

HESTER.

And yet, you think, I might do worse.
And so I might; for I believe him all
A gentleman should be. But I, Adele,
Shall never marry!

ADELE.

You shall never marry?

HESTER.

You need not laugh;—I never was more serious.

ADELE.

You mean, you shall not marry—'till you're asked.

HESTER.

Why, don't you think I've ever had an offer?

ADELE.

Indeed I know you have had more than one,
And may have many more. But yet—

HESTER.

But what?

ADELE.

The one has not been made you would accept,
But soon will be; and then I do not fear
That yours will be the fate of Whip-poor-will.

HESTER.

And what was that?

ADELE.

Give heed, and you shall hear.

SONG.—ADELE.

A maiden that dwelt in a bosky dell,
 Where all day long came the birds to tell
 Their tales of joy and their tales of woe,
 Was followed by many a love-lorn swain,
 But sighs and entreaties were all in vain,
 No "Yes" could they get, for she still said "No!"

Among the rest came one whose pride
 Would suffer him not to be twice denied.
 And though she his suit might at length have heard
 With favour, if he had that suit renewed,
 But taking her answer in angry mood,
 He left, and 'twas never again preferred.

In time she was changed to a Whip-poor-will,
 And he to a Frog; and such are they still.
 And nightly she utters this dolorous cry,
 "I-wish-I-had!" While mockingly he,
 To give to her sorrow more poignancy,
 "You-might-if-you-would!" does still reply.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

The company is beginning to assemble, young ladies,
 and Mrs. Allsides requests you will come down stairs.

HESTER.

Immediately.

[*Exit* SERVANT, followed by HESTER and ADELE.]

SCENE III.

Broadway, in front of the Astor. TAG, RAG, BOGTAIL, and SCRAPE.

TAG.

Now I'm for liberty. The largest liberty. The liberty for every man to do jist what he likes;—and nothing else. And so, if a man don't like to work—and I don't—that he needn't; that's all, and that government should take care on him.

RAG.

My views are entirely different. I am for order. No man should be allowed to step beyond the circle in which he was born. For instance, the son of a blacksmith, or a baker, should never rise above the condition of his father; and if that were the case, we should have no blacksmith's or baker's progeny giving themselves the airs of men born merchants.

SCRAPE.

Would you not then to industry, or talent,
Or genius, give a chance to triumph o'er
The difficulties of untoward fortune?

RAG.

Industry is all very well. It is, indeed, necessary to the preservation of order. The masses should, as a matter of course, be industrious. And if the son of a journey-

man baker should, by his industry, save enough to purchase an oven, I would have no objections to his setting up for a *Boss*, provided he kept his hands out of the dough of public affairs. But as to talent and genius, and such things, what have they to do with order? Why, there's nothing in the world more opposed to order than talent and genius.

BOBTAIL.

There I agree with you. It is the boast of every demagogue among us, that in this country there is ample room for the development of talent and genius, and all that sort of nonsense; and that is the reason that every foreigner, who happens to possess anything of the kind, makes a point of coming to our shores, 'till it is almost impossible to walk the streets now-a-days without running against somebody distinguished for talent or genius, or some such kind of thing. Now I go for keeping away from us every one not actually born upon our own soil, and I have no doubt that, if this policy were to be maintained for a few thousand years, we should have little reason to complain of either talent or genius, and that our beloved country would rise in the scale of nations to a rank but little inferior to that of the great empire of China itself.

SCRAPE.-

Wrong, wrong, all wrong. And if your plans were not

So full of mischief, they would make one laugh.
The tree of liberty, within whose shade
We now repose, would one of you uproot,
And plant instead that sapless thing called Order.
Another, over-anxious to preserve it,
So close would guard it from the air of heaven,
That it would die of kindness; while the third
Would plant an Upas in the place where now
It stands so proudly, that whoe'er should come
Within its influence, must instant die.
But surely here, where reason has full sway,
There cannot be a party so insane
To ask for such reforms; or if there be,
There is no ass that could be found in Congress,
Who would stand up, such nonsense to bray forth.

TAG.

A'n't there though? I think I know one, and he a'n't
so much of ass as you might fancy, that'll go for every
measure of the "Anti-Crotonians."

RAG.

And I one who stands prepared to carry out the views
of the "Friends of Order."

BOBTAIL.

And I have the assurance of a man, well known in the
commercial world, that he will go heart and soul for

every thing demanded by the "Reformed Order of Aboriginal Brothers."

SCRAPE.

Now, in the names of the great Abby Kelly,
The Mormon Prophet, and sweet Lucy Stone,
Who are these men that seek to make themselves
Eternal butts for ridicule to shoot at?

TAG.

My man—but remember, 'tis a secret as yet—is Mr.
Allsides.

RAG.

Allsides? He's mine.

BOBTAIL.

I say he's neither's; he's mine.

SCRAPE.

O this is admirable? Gideon Allsides,
Whose study, through a life of threescore years,
Has ever been how best to serve himself,
Stands pledged to each and all of you it seems?

TAG, RAG, *and* BOBTAIL.

He does.

SCRAPE.

And two of you, of course, must mean to cheat.

It squints that way.	TAG.	} <i>Together.</i>
No doubt, no doubt.	RAG.	
Of course he does.	BOBTAIL.	

SCRAPE.

Do you not see his drift? His great ambition,
 From boyhood up, has been to go to Congress;
 And, to obtain the end he's had in view,
 Would promise—one I needn't mention now—
 To make him our next President. I know
 You will no longer trust a man like this.

Not by a jugful.	TAG.	} <i>Together.</i>
I should guess not.	RAG.	
Trust him? the scoundrel!	BOBTAIL.	

SCRAPE.

And, for the cheat that he would put upon you,
 Would not be sorry to have satisfaction?

I'd not, for one.

TAG.

Nor I.

RAG.

I mean to have it.

BOBTAIL.

Together.

SCRAPE.

Then list to me. To-night he has a party,
 And when he's in the height of his enjoyment,
 Do you come suddenly among his guests,
 And then expose his gross duplicity.

I'll be there.

TAG.

And I.

RAG.

And so will I.

BOBTAIL.

Together.

SCRAPE.

Come at eleven. I'll be there to meet you.

[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE IV.

A room in ALLSIDES'.

Enter ALLSIDES, followed by MRS. ALLSIDES.

MRS. ALLSIDES.

Well, what's the matter now? Why did you bid me
Follow you here?

ALLSIDES.

Because I wished to tell you,
Without the risk of being overheard,
How much I disapprove your present conduct.

MRS. ALLSIDES.

My present conduct? Pray what have I done?

ALLSIDES.

Are you not trying all you can to ruin
My plans for the advancement of our daughter?

MRS. ALLSIDES.

What plans? and how can I have ruined them?

ALLSIDES.

You knew it was my wish to make Sir Bryan
My son-in-law, and therefore did oppose
The foolish whim of Hetty, here to bring
Her friend and schoolfellow, Adele St. Maur,

Lest she should interfere with my designs,
As my prophetic fears told me she would.
But you joined forces with her, and I yielded.
She came, and what is the result? Sir Bryan
Is taken with her pretty face, and manner
Of simple dignity, and you have sought
To mar my plans, by making daily for him
Some opportunity of meeting her,
Until, if I'm a judge in these affairs,
She'll have the chance, before this night is passed,
T' accept or to refuse him.

MRS. ALLSIDES.

Very well.

There's many a one I would prefer to him
For son-in-law. I think this stranger Windfall
Would not be hard to catch.

ALLSIDES.

A man unknown;
And one who may not have to bless himself
A red cent in his pocket.

MRS. ALLSIDES.

Don't you fear
That I'll allow him to propose for Hetty
'Till I know what he's worth. But you have said
Sir Bryan is not rich.

ALLSIDES.

But then his title—

MRS. ALLSIDES.

Could not be sold in Wall street for a dime.
 I thought you were too good a merchant e'er
 To buy a thing you knew not how to turn
 To some account, because it pleased your fancy.
 I do not mean that Hetty shall lose *caste*,
 By marrying a man who has not fashion
 To lift her up above the common herd.
 And though Sir Bryan's title might awhile
 Do that, it could not long, without the aid
 Of wealth, and therefore must she mate with wealth,
 Which can sustain itself without a title,
 Or wit, or talent, or even common sense.
 But come, we shall be missed. Let us return.

[Takes his arm and exeunt.]

Enter HESTER and ADELE at opposite doors.

ADELE.

Hester,

HESTER.

Adele,

ADELE.

I have a word to say.

HESTER.

I wish to mention that—

ADELE.

Sir Bryan—

HESTER.

Windfall—

ADELE.

You'll think it very foolish—wrong perhaps—

HESTER.

I scarce know what to say—so very sudden—

ADELE.

Quite unexpected—

HESTER.

I was not prepared—

ADELE.

I did not dream of such a thing—Sir Bryan—

HESTER.

Upon such short acquaintance—Windfall—

BOTH.

Proposed!

Has

* HESTER.

Adele!

ADELE.

What, Hetty?

HESTER.

Are you serious?

ADELE.

O don't be angry with me.

HESTER.

Silly puss!

I am not angry, but delighted. Well,
You have accepted him?

ADELE

No—not in words.

HESTER.

But in your pleased confusion. Don't say No.
But why didst not, like me, frankly accept
What we were thankful had been frankly offered?
But hush! some one is coming. Let's be gone.

[Exeunt at one door, and at the opposite.]

Enter SIR BRYAN and WINDFALL.

SIR BRYAN.

"I've done the deed! Didst thou not hear a noise?"
Of course you didn't, for there was not any.
But all the earth in silent wonder listened!

WINDFALL.

Listened to what? Pray speak intelligibly.

SIR BRYAN.

“I’ve passed the Rubicon!”

WINDFALL.

What do you mean?

SIR BRYAN.

I have proposed;—and more, have been accepted;
Or, what’s the same, I have not been refused.
Quick work, you think it, and it is not slow,
Although I’ve known the lady full a month.

WINDFALL.

A goodly flourish here of trumpets truly!
Why, man, I’ve beaten you—outdone you there
Where your brave countrymen have found no equals.
That which a month it took you to achieve,
Have I accomplished by a *coup de main*.
’Tis not twelve hours since first I saw Miss Allsides,
And yet does she stand pledged to be my wife.

SIR BRYAN.

Long live America! The myrtle wreath
That has so long adorned the brows of Erin,
Won by the gallant prowess of her gallant sons
In love encounters, I transfer to her

Who has the victor vanquished. Allsides here!
 Then I will *slope*. Am not I an apt scholar?
 You see I speak your language like a native.

WINDFALL.

Though I must see him, 'twill be time enough
 To-morrow: I've not nerve for it to-night.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter ALLSIDES.

ALLSIDES.

The night is wearing on, and Scrape has not
 Returned with a renewed demand for payment;
 And I have almost ceased to fear his coming.
 His object was to fright me: and he did it!
 And seeing that, I think he'll let things rest
 A few days longer. In the meantime, I
 Receive the nomination of three parties,
 By one of which I'm sure to be elected;
 And then, though I'm dishonoured as a merchant,
 I may hold up my head among the proudest,
 For shall not I be always *Honourable*?

[*Enter* RAG, TAG and BOBTAIL, *arm-in-arm.*]

What these all here? This is malapropos.
 I must not seem annoyed though. Welcome, friends.

TAG.

No you don't, old feller. You can't come it over us
 any more with your soft sawder.

ALLSIDES.

What does this mean?

RAG.

That you're found out, sir.

TAG.

Completely blowed. Ruined past pre-emption.

BOBTAIL.

Disgraced forever before the "Reformed Order of Aboriginal Brothers."

RAG.

And utterly despised by every "Friend of Order."

ALLSIDES.

I do not understand this, gentlemen.

TAG.

Don't you, though? Then maybe I can make you. You wanted to go to Congress. You didn't care who sent you, not you; but go you would, an' was willin' to take the nomernation of "Anti-Crotonians," "Friends of Order," or "Deformed Order of Abominable Brothers," though I reckon 'twould be blamed hard to find three parties more differenter than them 'ere three: an' you promised to go for the measures on 'em all. But this was a givin' a leetle too much pork for a shil-

lin', an' so we've come to tell you, that your sarvices
a'n't a wanted by none of us:—that's all.

ALLSIDES.

This is too much!

SCRAPE (*entering*).

Then what you have to spare
May help you to redeem the notes I hold.

ALLSIDES.

O do not jest with me! I shall go mad!

SCRAPE.

I pray you do not so 'till these are honoured.

ALLSIDES.

I have no money, Scrape. I tell you—none!
And if you mean to keep your barbarous threat,
You ruin me, my wife, and my poor child!

SCRAPE.

Your child! What then? I never gave my word
To shield your child from danger. Never vowed
To share my home with her; and at my board,
And in my heart, to give her a child's place.
And if I drive her forth to beggary,
I shall be no faith-breaker; shall offend
Against no law—but of *humanity!*
And who regards that law! Not surely he

Who cast the stripling Orwell on the world,
To be the sport or victim of its waves.

ALLSIDES.

It was not I who cast him. He deserted
The house that should have been his home—

SCRAPE.

But was not.

And as you dealt with mine—

ALLSIDES.

With yours?

SCRAPE.

Yes, mine.

I am that Orwell whom you once called friend ;
Who would have trusted you with untold gold ;
Who did entrust you with a greater treasure—
The happiness of his poor boy. And now
I come to deal with yours as you with mine—

ALLSIDES.

O merey ! mercy !

SCRAPE.

I have none to give.
The spirit of revenge alone has held
Possession of my heart for eighteen years,
And all that time have I, by day and night,
Plodded and plotted to attain the end

To which I now have reached. And do you think
To turn me from my purpose by your whinings?

ALLSIDES.

Then I am ruined! ruined!

[*Staggers to a seat.*]

MRS. ALLSIDES (*entering*).

What's the matter?

SCRAPE.

O, nothing but a trifling settlement
Between your husband and a creditor.

MRS. ALLSIDES.

You've chosen a strange time for such a purpose.
Day and the counting-house I think were fitter
For matters of this kind.

SCRAPE.

All times and places
Alike are fit for what we have to settle.

MRS. ALLSIDES.

In Heaven's name, sir!—

ALLSIDES (*coming forward and speaking to her aside*).

Now, Martha, don't provoke him.

'Tis Orwell.

Enter WINDFALL, unperceived.

MRS. ALLSIDES.

Orwell? I am truly glad! [To SCRAPE.

My strongest wish for years has been to see you,
 To make amends, as far as words can do so,
 For the great wrong you suffered at my hands.
 Your son was given to my care. I meant
 To be a mother to him. But my time
 Was so consumed by fashionable follies,
 I could not find an hour to spare to him
 Who should have had the most of my attention.
 The boy was proud and sensitive, and thought
 I studied to neglect him, which, Heaven knows,
 I never did, and from our house withdrew,
 Much to my shame, and not less to my sorrow,
 For many a night have I shed bitter tears,
 In thinking what mischances might befall him.

WINDFALL (*advancing*).

Whatever wrongs that boy believed himself
 From you t' have suffered, are atoned for now
 By that confession. I am Harry Orwell.

SCRAPE (*embracing him*).

My son!

WINDFALL.

My father? Is it possible?

[*Enter ADELE, HESTER and SIR BRYAN.*

Then I am not the lonely thing I thought me.

SCRAPE. .

That are you not, but have relations here
More than you dream of.

[*Pointing to ADELE.*

Boy, embrace your sister.

[*WINDFALL and ADELE embrace.*

ADELE.

O joy! I have a brother! But, sir, tell me,
Who are you that did first inform me of
My parents, and a brother gives me now?

WINDFALL.

The one who best should know. He is our father.

ADELE (*throwing herself into the arms of SCRAPE*).

The craving of my heart is satisfied.

I ask for nothing more.

SIR BRYAN.

But I do, faith!

HESTER.

What can you ask for?

SIR BRYAN.

That you will allow me
To be your brother—by the way of marriage.

HESTER.

But I've no sister you can take to wife.

SIR BRYAN.

But Windfall has, and isn't that the same?

MRS. ALLSIDES.

What does this mean?

SIR BRYAN.

Why, simply, that Miss Allsides,
With your consent, of course, and her good father's,
Has promised to become the wife of Windfall.
And what I ask, is just to be her brother,
By marriage with the sister of her husband.

WINDFALL.

Adele consents, I know. What says my father?

SCRAPE.

Sir Bryan is a sort of nobleman—

SIR BRYAN.

A nobleman? What Irishman is not?
Why, sir, the *boccah*, by the wayside sitting,
In my poor country boasts the blood of princes.
For me, I'm but a landless Baronet,
To which the title add of—Gentleman.

SCRAPE.

Noble or gentle, you may deem th' alliance
Of one like me no honour. Years and years,
I've sought, by means of which I cannot boast,—
Though none dishonest—to amass a sum

Should give me power o'er him I thought had wronged me.
And I have got it!

WINDFALL.

But you will not use it?

SCRAPE.

I will not use it.

ADELE.

Bless you for that word!

SCRAPE (*handing papers to NESTER*).

To my son's wife I yield the power I held—
Assured she'll not abuse it.

MRS. ALLSIDES.

This is noble!

SIR BRYAN.

But what's to be my fate?

SCRAPE.

As you decide.

If you consent to lay your title down,
And, with a moderate fortune, turn your mind
To something that, by honest industry,
Shall make you independent, with my child—
Though loth am I so soon to part with her—
That fortune will I give you, and my blessing.

SIR BRYAN.

I take you at your word. Let this dear girl

But call me husband, and I'll never more
Lay claim to other title.

ALLSIDES.

I scarce know
How to excuse my faults.

SIR BRYAN.

Then don't attempt it.
Though you perhaps have lost a seat in Congress,
You should be satisfied with what you have—
The kindness of the friends now smiling on you.

TAG.

And I think he ought to be very well contented, that
things have turned out as they are.

SCRAPE.

So do we all. And may no false ambition
Tempt him again to play the politician.

ALLSIDES.

No, of that folly I am cured forever,
Though something late.

SIR BRYAN.

Well, BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.

The Oath of Office:
A Tragedy.

CHARACTERS.

JAMES LYNCH FITZSTEPHEN, *Mayor of Galway.*

WALTER LYNCH, *his son.*

BLAKE OF THE HILLS, *brother-in-law of Lynch.*

ARTHUR, *son of Blake.*

TIRLOOH, *foster-brother of Walter.*

GOMEZ, *a young Spaniard.*

PRIEST.

CAHIR, }
MIHL } *Citizens.*

GAOLER.

FIRST OFFICER.

SECOND OFFICER.

GENTLEMEN, SAILORS, CITIZENS, ETC.

DAME MARGARET, *wife of Lynch.*

AGNES, *the betrothed of Walter.*

LADIES, CITIZENS' WIVES, ETC.

SCENE.—*Galway in Ireland.* TIME.—*Near the close of the Fifteenth century.*

TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

CALLED from thy granite hills, and by a voice
As Heaven-inspired as his—the Prophet old—
The shepherd youth who summoned from the fold
To reign a monarch of th' Almighty's choice—
The voice of a Free People! to the seat
A Jackson honoured, and a Washington
Made holy, let not then, as oft is done,
Ambition with thy consciences play the cheat,
Thy soul to juggle of its richest gem—
Faith to thy country. Registered in Heaven
Now stands thy "Oath of Office," and shall stand
Forever, to approve thee or condemn,
As thou the power but lent to thee—not given—
Shalt use to bless or curse thy native land.

THE OATH OF OFFICE.



A C T I.

SCENE I.

A hall in the house of the Mayor. A number of persons present; some seated at tables and others standing in groups, or walking about conversing. Among the latter are AGNES and GOMEZ. TIRLOGH comes from one of the tables.

TIRLOGH.

BRAVE doings here! In kitchen and in hall
Is nothing heard but sounds of merriment,
Where blend the laugh and song harmoniously
With music of the viol and the harp.
In every face one sees, as in a mirror,
The joy reflected that makes bright his own;
And in the friendly grasp, of hands that ne'er
Have met before, is felt the heartiness
With which each guest, in all this vast assembly,
Doth enter into these festivities.
And, sooth to say, Lynch the Munificent

Gives all a noble welcome. There is not
 A Baron of the Pale so sumptuously
 Could entertain his friends as doth this merchant,
 Upon whose tables luxuries are crowded
 To sate an epicure. And this profusion
 Is all in honour of the proud alliance
 This day contracted by young Walter Lynch,
 This rich man's heir, and my dear foster-brother,
 And O! may it be happy as 'tis proud!
 For he deserves it should be.

[WALTER comes dejectedly down the hall; then stops, and leaning
 against one of the pillars, appears to be regarding AGNES
 and GOMEZ.]

How is this?

He hath not much the seeming of a bridegroom.
 Pray Heaven he be not ill! Ah, I remember.
 This is the last night of the sojourn here
 Of the young Spaniard, Gomez, and his heart
 Is now divided between joy and grief—
 The lover and the friend. Shall I accost him?
 No;—he were better pleased to be alone;
 And so I'll leave him.

[Retires among the guests

WALTER, (coming farther down.)

It was but the fancy
 Of a distempered brain. I know them both.
 The stain of falsehood could not rest upon

The soul of either. Gomez is my friend ;—
 My brother ;—bound to me by strongest ties ;—
 Beyond suspicion true. And Agnes—O
 The angels, that in Heaven's court do wait,
 Are not more pure than she ! Then to the winds
 I give my doubts to scatter as they will !

[*After a pause* .

And yet I like not they should seem so well
 To understand each other. Eyes are on them
 Which may not read their actions as mine do.
 The smile and blush, that follow every word
 He breathes into the ear she bends towards him,
 The evil heart might sadly misinterpret,
 And evil tongues—What will not evil tongues ?—
 Convert to proofs of crime they have not dreamed of.
 Well, let them do so. Shall my peace depend
 On others' fancies, or my own convictions ?
 And, while I know my friend and love are true,
 What need I care if false the world should deem them ?

ARTHUR, (*coming from the nearest table.*)

Upon my troth, good coz, thou play'st the host
 Right hospitably. All thy guests must feel
 Much flattered, by thy efforts to make pleasant
 The time they mean to pass beneath this roof,
 In honour of thy most august betrothal.
 Why, man, thy length of face, and moody silence
 Are as ill suited to an hour like this

As was the Death's head at Egyptian feasts—
 Filling with gloom the hearts that should be brimmed—
 Even like our goblets—with the wine of gladness.
 Come, rouse thee. Talk, and laugh, and drink, as I do.
 Or, if thou wilt not, imitate, at least,
 The gentle 'haviour of thy bride, sweet Agnes,
 Who, though she says but little with her lips,
 Discourses eloquently with her eyes—
 And how those eyes can speak thou shouldst know well!—
 To the swart Spaniard, who, if not thy friend,
 I trow might very well be thought thy rival,
 And one who urges no unthriving suit.

WALTER.

Tush, Arthur, this is folly! Thou to-night
 All things behold'st through an uncertain medium,
 And dost see nothing as in truth it is.
 The wine cup hath such wondrous power, 'twill oft
 To friendship give the form of rivalry.
 Go, join thy fellows; and, ere thou shalt drain
 Another goblet to thy mistress' beauty,
 I will make one among you.

ARTHUR.

See thou dost;
 And we will make thee soon forget that earth
 E'er knew the stolid mar-sport, Gravity.

[Returns to the table,

WALTER.

He might be thought my rival! Though 'twas flung
At random, to my heart that shaft was sped,
And there it rankles.

[Goes to the table, and fills a goblet.

Friends, ye do not drink.

Come, fill. [*They fill.*] And let me now propose a
toast.

Our house's honoured guest;—the noble Gomez!

ALL.

The noble Gomez!

[*They drink.*

WALTER.

In his name I thank you.

ARTHUR.

In faith, 'tis well thou do'st; for he nor ears,
Nor tongue, nor aught has now for more than one.

WALTER, (*aside, and leaving the table.*)

Another shaft! But what a fool am I
To let the chatter of this brainless jay
So chafe me! Now they seek a place apart,
As if they felt the gaze of curious eyes,
And sought to shun it. I will mark them closely.
But how is this? I am not jealous? No!
I do not fear there can be aught between them
That could to nicest honour give offence.

Yet, for a moment's pastime, will I mark them.

[He returns to the pillar, against which he leans, while AGNES and GOMEZ, separating from the crowd, come down the hall, and stop opposite to him.]

AGNES.

Thou goest then to-morrow ?

GOMEZ.

With the dawn.

Even now, her white wings spread to catch the breeze,
 The bark impatient in the harbour waits
 That is to bear me to my native Spain,
 And the dear parents my heart leaps to name.
 Yet, credit me, sweet lady, sad am I
 To leave for ever this fair land of thine,
 Whose hospitable homes have ever been
 As open to me as my father's halls.

AGNES.

But sure this going cannot be for ever ?
 Thou wilt, I know, leave many a friend behind
 Who would rejoice to see thee here again.
 Walter will miss thee sadly.

GOMEZ.

At the risk

Of seeming selfish, I will say I hope so.
 For I would grieve to think that one with whom
 I've passed long months—and yet not long enough

For the enjoyment we together shared—
Should let mine image from his memory fall
As something all unworthy of his care.
And yet 'twere wise to count that so it will be,
Since with him leave I one who well might make
The truest heart prove recreant to friendship.
Thou soon, I fear, wilt teach him to forget me.

AGNES.

Nay, that I would not were it in my power,
But rather strive to keep within his breast
Thy memory alive, by speaking oft
Of him he loves, when thou art far away.
Yet scarce shall need do that. What Walter once
Has loved, he loves unchangeably; besides,
Thou art his other self, and with his life
Thy memory must live.

GOMEZ.

An easy task

It is to win us to the faith that we
Do hope is true. O may'st thou prove in this
A prophetess!

AGNES.

But thou wilt see my father?

GOMEZ.

I fear me much 'twill be impossible.

The noble Lynch will hold his revels late,
In honour of his son's most happy choice,
And, being my last night beneath his roof,
I cannot leave without a farewell blessing
From him who well has filled my father's place.

AGNES.

Yet, though it should be late, thou canst one moment
Snatch from the hour of thy departure, just
To bid adieu to one who loves thee well,
But who, alas! is all too ill to leave
His couch, even for the sake of a last word
To his old friend, thine honoured father. Then,
I pray thee, let me say that thou wilt come,
And take his farewell message?

GOMEZ.

As thou wilt.

It is not easy to deny thee, lady.

AGNES.

Thanks! Now I'll home, and cheer his kind old heart
With this good news. 'Twill bring him back his youth.

GOMEZ.

Pray Heaven it bring him that without which youth,
Much as 'tis prized, would be no blessing—health.
But go not yet. Thy absence cannot fail
To dim the light of joy that should illumine
The festive hall. Indeed we cannot part thee.

AGNES.

I am my father's nurse : and, though not well
Could I absent myself from this gay scene,
Prepared to honour one whom Lynch Fitzstephen
Deems not unworthy of a name like his,
Must not my patient longer leave alone,
To count in solitude the hours his daughter
Devotes to pleasure. But no farewell yet.
I'll see thee at the bedside of my father.

SERVANT, (*who has come from the upper end of the hall.*)
Sir, 'tis my master's wish to speak to you.

GOMEZ.

I come to him. Lady, I kiss thy hand.

[*Follows the servant up, and exit*

AGNES, (*who in crossing the hall encounters WALTER.*)
Where didst thou hide thyself? I have not seen thee
For the last hour, I'm sure.

WALTER, (*ironically.*)

And missed me, doubtless.

AGNES, (*gaily.*)

Thou thinkest now I'll flatter, and say, Yes.
But that I will not. No, I did not miss thee.

WALTER, (*bitterly.*)

I did not think thou could'st. My good friend Gomez
Took care of that. My place was well supplied.

AGNES.

It was.

WALTER.

No doubt; and might have been even longer?

AGNES.

It might. The conversation of thy friend—
So full of lofty, yet most grateful, thought,
And rich in that quaint lore which renders Spain
So dear to every lover of romance—
Would from the dull and careless win attention,
And I—or thou hast flattered—am not either.
He told me of a youth, in bondage held
By a Grenadian noble;—one who hated,
With Moslem hate, our pure and holy faith;—
And of a lovely maid—the bride betrothed
Of his most cruel master—who beheld,
With pity first, but very soon with love,
The Christian slave, and tasked her woman's wit
Thenceforth, how she the captive could assist
In sundering the chains, that galled his heart
More than his limbs.

WALTER.

And she succeeded?

AGNES.

Yes.

And, with the freedom he had languished for,

She gave him—what a loving, manly heart
Would higher prize—her fond and beauteous self!

WALTER.

'Twas liberal of her!—very liberal!
Thou thinkest so, dost not? And gladly would'st
Have played the part of the fair Moorish maiden,
And given life and liberty to him
Had won thy love?

AGNES.

Ay, would I. Who would not?
Nay, I would think me blessed—if other means
I had not to evince my heart's devotion—
If e'er the glorious privilege were mine,
To lay my life down for the friends I love.

WALTER.

A most heroic sentiment! and spoken
Right loftily!—but thrown away on one
Who would far rather that his friends should live
Than die for him. O from my soul I loathe
The mawkish cant of those upon whose lips
Are ever words of fealty and devotion!
A woman's love should in her life be seen;—
Not spoken in her words, but by her acts,
And those not such as vain romancers weave
Into loose tales, to which no modest ear
Should listen. He thou call'st my friend—

AGNES.

I call!

Is he not so? I thought you were sworn brothers.

WALTER.

And who says we are not? Yet, to my thought,
The friend who entertains a maiden's ear—
That maid already an affianced wife—
With tales of silly passion, which inflame
The heart, and render giddy the weak brain,
Has little of the care a friend should have
For a friend's peace.

AGNES.

I listen to thee, Walter,
But though mine ear takes in thy words, their sense
Escapes me quite. Possess me of thy meaning.

WALTER.

Then, to speak plainly, was it like a friend
So long for Gomez to keep thee engaged,
With the invention of some idle rhymer,
'Till he had drawn upon you every eye
In wonderment, and raised, in coarser minds,
Thoughts little flattering or to thee or me.

AGNES.

What mind so evil as to let a thought
Intrude would sully a true maiden's honour,
From circumstance like this?

WALTER.

Such minds are many.

AGNES.

I'm sorry for it; for I would that all
Were barred against the entrance of such thoughts,
Which cannot fail to leave a trail behind
Worse than the serpent's.

WALTER.

We should then be careful
Not to give life to thoughts that purest minds
Could not bid freely welcome. Shall we from
The shadow shrink, and yet not fear the substance?

AGNES.

There's something in thy tone, more than thy words,
That tells me I have done amiss. But how?
Thou'lt not refuse to let me know my fault?

WALTER.

Thy deep attention to the tale of Gomez—
If tale he told—

AGNES.

Walter! If tale he told?
And think'st thou what I said a fabrication,
'Neath which I meanly something sought to hide
I would not dare to own? If, sir, so lightly
Thou dost esteem mine honour now, what surety

Have I, that more respect it shall receive
 When in thy hands is placed a husband's power?
 Heaven keep thee in thy senses! and farewell.

[*Going*

WALTER, (*detaining her.*)

But Agnes!—

AGNES, (*breaking from him.*)

Loose me! I will hear no more!

[*Exit at one side of the hall as DAME MARGARET enters at the other.*]

WALTER, (*looking after her.*)

Can she be false? O ne'er detected guilt
 Could look so like insulted innocence.
 Her tone, where anger was with sorrow mingled,
 Her eye, whose fire was almost quenched in tears,
 Her bearing proud, and yet so womanly,
 Bear testimony all that she is true.

DAME MARGARET.

Is Agnes gone, and hast thou not gone with her?
 Fie on thee, sir! is this thy gallantry?
 'Tis rather soon, methinks, to play the churl,
 The night of thy betrothal. Haste, and join her.

WALTER, (*with affected carelessness.*)

She does not need my escort: she has servants.

DAME MARGARET.

She has, and thou the chief. So after her.

[*Retires up the hall.*

WALTER.

So far, at least, will I as to the air ;
And try if that will cool my fevered blood,
And still to healthful calm my throbbing brain.

[Exit



SCENE II.

Another apartment in the same. Enter LYNCH and GOMEZ

LYNCH.

I must not keep thee longer from the friends
Who wait thee in the hall. And yet to part
With my dear Walter scarce could be more painful
Than is this parting with the son of him
Who, from the morning of my life, 'till now,
When evening's shades are gathering thick around me,
Has been even as a brother to my heart.
Age makes us wondrous selfish. Every good
That we may hold, as we approach the grave
Becomes each moment dearer, 'till our grasp
Is loosened only by the hand of death.
And though in justice I should render back
Unto my friend the youth entrusted to me,
To be companion to my boy, that in
Our children might their fathers' friendship live,
Thou'st been so long my son, I yield thee up
With deep reluctance. Yet it must be so !
And to the evil we cannot prevent

We should, at least, with seeming grace submit.
 So now farewell! and with thee take the blessing
 Of one whose heart, though chilled by age and cares,
 For thine and thee hath cherished at its core
 The love that warmed it in life's budding spring.

GOMEZ.

O, my dear lord, I know not how to thank thee
 For all the kindness found beneath this roof,
 To which I came a stranger, but depart
 A son, at least, in love. I go; and with me
 Bear that will summer to the winter be
 Of my dear father's age. How will he joy
 To hear of the success that has a life
 Of virtue crowned;—making his early friend
 The first in honour as the first in wealth;—
 And blessed—O far beyond or wealth or honour!—
 In every thing that makes a heaven of home!
 But I must hasten, to fulfil a promise
 To Agnes made, that I would see her father
 Ere my departure, and that hour is near.
 So, gracious lord, farewell!

LYNCH, (*embracing him.*)

Farewell, dear youth,
 And may our Holy and Beneficent Mother
 Make smooth for thee the passage of the deep!

[*Exit GOMEZ.*]

Enter DAME MARGARET.

Alone, my husband?

LYNCH.

Not alone, dear wife.

The man of active mind is ne'er alone,
For with him live the dead of buried ages,
And distant friends are ever present to him.
But now I'd other company than such
As the magician Thought can conjure up.
The youthful Gomez hath this moment left me.

DAME MARGARET.

Heaven speed him on his homeward way! How must
His mother long to fold him to her heart!

LYNCH.

And thinkest thou a father's heart may not,
Towards the object of its love, as fondly
Even as a mother's, yearn?

DAME MARGARET.

It may be so;

Yet it is hardly what we would expect
From man's rough nature. He may look with pride
Upon the son through whom, to after years,
His name and honours are to be transmitted,
As thou upon our Walter, who, his faults—
The faults of youth—the weeds that never spring
But from a generous soil—being now redeemed,

Will add new lustre to thine honoured name.
 But were he sickly; of a feeble temper;
 Unsightly to behold, would still thy love
 Him clasp unto thine heart, 'till he had grown
 To be the dearest portion of thyself?
 Or would'st not rather cast the creature from thee,
 In bitterness of soul, for being that
 Which thou could'st take no pride in? for, believe me,
 Pride's oft the spring of much that man calls Love.

LYNCH.

Well, as thou wilt;—thy sex's privilege;—
 For 'tis a theme on which I cannot argue.
 I only know I love our boy—as I
 Have loved his mother—with my heart and soul.

DAME MARGARET.

Yet with a difference. Thou lovest me
 For what I was;—but him for what he shall be.

LYNCH.

For what ye are;—the choicest blessings Heaven,
 Throughout a long and prosperous life, hath given me;
 And 'twere to be ungrateful to that Heaven,
 For what it hath bestowed, to love you not.
 But (*taking her hand to lead her out*) let us to our
 guests; and though the hour
 Is wearing late, we still must urge their stay.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A street before the house of AGNES'S father. Enter WALTER.

WALTER.

How soothing are thine influences, Night,
To the perturbed spirit. Thy sweet breath
Whispers of peace; and as thy holy dews
Fall on the burning brow, the wild disorder
Which filled the brain with images of horror,
Gives place to thoughts of love and confidence.
The blood that late, with hot and furious haste,
Rushed through these veins, now temperately moves,
As if no maddening draught e'er mingled with it;
And the hard pulse, so painfully that throbbed,
Is beating even as a sleeping babe's.
The pangs of Jealousy—the vulture that
With sharpest tooth was gnawing at my heart—
Vex me no more; and I have but one wish—
To see, and be to Agnes reconciled.

[Enter GOMEZ from the house, and passes hurriedly up the street.]

Ha! what is this? I hope the old man's illness
Hath not assumed a more alarming form,
And this a messenger sent out for aid.
I will accost him. By yon Heaven! 'tis Gomez!
What does he here at such an hour as this?
What errand can he have—but one? O traitor!

Smooth-browed and serpent-tongued! from thy false
heart

I'll draw the venomous flood that feeds thy life!

[Drawing his sword, and following.]

Ho, villain! turn, and meet what thou deservest.

[Exit after GOMEZ.]

GOMEZ, (*without.*)

What means this violence?

WALTER, (*without.*)

My sword shall answer.

[Clashing of swords without.]

*Re-enter GOMEZ, mortally wounded, who staggers down the street,
and after him WALTER.*

GOMEZ.

Whoe'er thou art, thy madness hath destroyed
The life of one that ne'er did wilful wrong
To living thing; yet Heaven forgive it thee!

[Falls and dies.]

WALTER, (*after a pause.*)

What have I done! Destroyed a life, so dear
That yesterday mine own I would have perilled
To save it from mischance! Sent unprepared—
Without a moment for one prayer for mercy—
A soul into the presence of its Judge!
And here I stand, beneath the calm blue heavens,
All crimsoned o'er with blood!

My brain is burning!

My heart is turned to ice! and aguish shiverings
Do shake my palsied limbs!

What forms are these,
That gather round and fright me with their glare?
Why do they point to that poor ghastly corse,
And clap their hands, and laugh exultingly?
O fiends are they, that from the realms of woe
Have come to triumph in my misery,
Before they drag me with them down th' abyss,
To share the doom of howling murderers!
Murderers! Who calls me *Murderer*? Who
Looked on, and saw my sword avenge the wrong
My heart had suffered from his treachery?
No eye beheld the deed,—but that of HIM
Who knows how deep had been the provocation.
Then why should I before my fellow-men
Be branded as a murderer, when the sea,
Which almost to the spot whereon I stand
Rolls its eternal waves, hath depths wherein
The secret of my crime may hidden lie
Until the day when all shall be revealed?
Then to the sea will I this form commit;
And though Remorse tug ever at my heart,
Will dress my face to look like Innocence.

[*Takes up the body, and bears it off.*]

A C T I I.

SCENE.

*A hall in the house of the Mayor. LYNCH discovered writing.**
Enter ARTHUR, yawning.

ARTHUR.

Why, uncle mine, what villainous hours ye keep
 In this unrighteous city. Scarce had I
 Embraced my dearest friend, the couch, when roused
 By clamours in the street, enow to wake
 The sleepers of the grave. What mean those noises?

LYNCH, (*looking up.*)

Noises? What noises? I hear nothing, save
 The ordinary sounds of city life,
 Which, when thou art as used to them as I,
 Thou wilt as little heed. Go sleep again.

[*Resumes his writing.*]

ARTHUR.

I do not mean the hawkers' dissonance,
 Or heavy tramp of plodding citizens,
 But mingled shrieks, and oaths, and lamentations,
 And words that seemed to speak of murder.

LYNCH, (*rising and coming forward.*)

Murder?

No brawl I hope has brought disgrace upon
 Our city. I must see to this.

TIRLOGH, (*entering hastily.*)

My lord!

LYNCH.

Well, what's the matter?

TIRLOGH.

O my lord! my lord!

The noble Gomez has been basely murdered!

LYNCH.

Great Heaven! But no. Thou hast not heard aright.

TIRLOGH.

O I would give mine ears to know mine ears
Had played me false. But they, alas! too truly
In this have done their office. He is murdered!
And the vile wretch who robbed him of his life,
The rifled casket—his poor body—cast
Into the sea, but which the sea, unwilling
So foul a deed to hide, returned to earth,
And by some sailors, who were hither coming
To hasten his departure from our shores,
Upon the beach at early morn was found.

LYNCH.

O Tirlogh, this is heavy news indeed!
A youth, of fairest promise, is cut off
In manhood's early bloom. A heart, wherein
All kindly virtues had their dwelling place,
Is turned to ashes. And—ah, heaviest woe!—

The love, that filled with light his distant home,
 Is quenched in blood; and his poor, aged parents,
 Must totter on in darkness to the grave
 No filial hand shall deck. Alas, for them,
 Even more than this poor victim, do I grieve!
 But is there nought that to the murderer points?

TIRLOGH.

Nothing, my lord.

LYNCH.

And yet he shall be found.

What noise is that?

[*Voices without.*]

TIRLOGH.

They bring the body hither.

[*Enter Spanish sailors bearing the body of GOMEZ, followed by CAHIR, and citizens of both sexes.*]

MEN, (*as they enter.*)

Woe, to our country, woe! In all the tears
 That from her have been wrung, no drops of shame
 'Till now e'er mingled. Gone, alas! for ever
 The name she long hath borne among the nations—
 Erin the Hospitable! Full of trust
 The stranger came unto her shores, but, ah!
 Instead of welcome, and the hand of friendship,
 Received and fell beneath the murderer's knife.

WOMEN, (*following.*)

Alas, for the poor stranger! far from home,

And all he loved, to die alone!—unpitied!—
 Without a sister's hand to smooth his pillow;—
 A mother's voice to soothe his dying pangs!
 Alas! alas! 'tis ever hard to die:—
 But hardest is't to him who dies alone!

LYNCH, (*who has been for some time gazing on the body.*)
 Alas, my friends! this is a piteous sight!
 And one on which not even the passing stranger
 Could look unmoved. How must it then afflict
 One who, like me, hath known this youth for years;
 Hath loved him as he would a second son;
 And, after filling long a father's place,
 Must now lament him with a father's grief!

CAHIR.

We all do know, my lord, how well you loved him;
 And know we shall not call on you in vain
 For speedy vengeance on his murderer.

LYNCH.

Doubt not that ye shall call in vain for JUSTICE,
 For that is all, good friend, we should require,
 And more it is than we may dare to meet.
 But justice shall be done. I have an oath
 Which binds me, on the peril of my soul,
 To grant impartial justice to all men;—
 And I have done so. And, what never yet
 Have I withheld from any who did seek it,

I will not now deny, when the dear son
Of a dear friend calls for it from the dead.

CAHIR.

Justice or vengeance—call it what you will—
'Tis much the same. All that we ask of you,
Is that his murderer shall not go unpunished.

LYNCH.

That shall he not. The Law's decree is DEATH
To him who wilfully another's life
Shall take. And whosoe'er the murderer,
Were he the dearest friend I have on earth,
Nay, dearer even than that—mine only son,
I must and will obey the Law's behest.
But first the obsequies of this poor youth
Shall celebrated be with all observance ;
While through the city, upon every altar,
The Holy Mass shall Heaven propitiate
For the immortal soul, that hath been thus
Untimely sent into God's awful presence.
But (*to Arthur*), where is Walter? Heavily this news
Will fall upon his heart, for as a brother
He loved this noble, but illfated, youth.
Go seek, and break it gently to him, nephew.

[*Exit ARTHUR.*]

But who, O Gomez, shall the tidings bear
Of thy disastrous end to thy poor parents!
Whose eager gaze is bent towards our shores,

While fancy makes of every wave, that lifts
 Its snowy crest above the dark green sea,
 The ship that to their longing arms shall bring
 The treasure they had given unto my keeping,
 Nor dream how fearfully their trust has failed.

ARTHUR, (*re-entering in alarm.*)

He is not in his room. His bed looks not
 As through the night it had been occupied.
 He may have gone with Gomez to his boat.
 Pray Heaven he hath not been as foully dealt with!

LYNCH.

Not in his bed? What horrors crowd my brain!
 Fly! Let the household be alarmed!

WALTER, (*entering.*)

No need.

Walter is here. The wretched, blood-stained Walter!

[TIRLOGH *hurries to him.*

LYNCH.

What is the meaning of those dreadful words?
 With what blood art thou stained?

WALTER.

The blood of Gomez.

LYNCH, (*in a low voice.*)

Have mercy, Heaven!—let not the thing I fear
 Become reality, and crush me utterly!

TIRLOGH, (*to Walter.*)

Restrain thy tongue! Dost thou not see all eyes
Are on thee bent in wonder or in anger?

WALTER, (*to Tirlogh.*)

I heed them not. My gaze is inward turned,
And there I see a soul defiled with blood!

TIRLOGH, (*to Walter.*)

O, for the love of Heaven! restrain thy tongue.

LYNCH.

Come hither, Walter. Let me understand
What thou dost mean. Thou and thy friend did quarrel.
Ye fought;—and thou didst slay him. Was it so?

WALTER.

We had no quarrel.

LYNCH, (*eagerly.*)

And thou didst not slay him?
O Walter! say to me thou didst not slay him.

WALTER.

Father, I slew him.

LYNCH.

Pray for me, ye saints,
That I my manhood lose not, nor my reason!
Yet 'twas not by design?

WALTER.

O would to Heaven

That, as thou wishest, I could say it was not!
But in a fit of momentary madness—

TIRLOGH.

Ay, madness;—and the fit is on him still.

LYNCH, (*joyfully.*)

I knew, I knew thou didst not—couldst not mean it!

WALTER.

Alas, I cannot leave thee even the comfort—
Poor as it is—of that belief. But hear me,
Father; and ye, who in amazement stand,
Hear also, that, should love of life hereafter
Lead me to palliate my dire offence,
Ye may be able to convict of falsehood
My coward tongue. I slew him. Not by chance,
But with deliberate purpose. Ye all know
How I did love him. Even as I loved,
So did I trust him;—and he did deceive me.
Deceived, and wronged me there where all men feel
The wrong most keenly;—wronged me in mine honour.
Beneath the cover of the night, I saw
The traitor stealing from the house of her
Whose faith to me was plighted. Stung to madness—
By proof of my disgrace—I rushed upon,
And slew him.

ARTHUR.

He deserved the fate he met.

LYNCH.

O teach me patience, all-enduring Heaven!

WALTER.

Then smote upon my heart the sense of guilt;
 And loud within my breast a voice cried out
 In condemnation of the deed, which even
 My bitter wrongs refused to justify.
 And straight I fled, as if upon my steps
 Followed th' avenger of a brother's blood,
 And hid myself within a forest deep.
 But, though I felt secure from all pursuit,
 I could not rest; and from my hiding-place
 Came forth, with purpose to demand from justice
 A murderer's reward.

LYNCH.

O wretched boy!

He thou didst slay was never more thy friend
 Than when thou deem'dst him false. The visit made
 Was not to Agnes—but her suffering father.

WALTER.

O do not drive me mad! Do not deprive me
 Of the dear thought—that my revenge was just!

LYNCH.

Thy cruel rage was wholly without cause.
 His visit and its object both I knew.

WALTER, (*throwing himself by the side of the body.*)

O murdered, murdered friend!

[*Starting up and drawing his sword.*]

But I will join thee!

LYNCH, (*wresting the sword from him.*)

And do a double murder? Be a man,

And bear the penalty thy crime has dared.

And, though it reach thy life, it cannot fall

With half the weight on thee that 'twill on me!

WALTER.

My father!

LYNCH, (*to an attendant.*)

Call me here the officers.

[*Exit attendant.*]

TIRLOGH, (*throwing himself on his knees before LYNCH.*)

My lord, my lord! O think before you act!

Let not stern Justice drown the voice of Nature.

He hath done wrong;—he owns it;—and repents it.

And than repentance who can more demand?

He is your son—your *only* son; the sole

Remaining prop of a time-honoured house.

Then do not give him over to the Law—

The cruel Law, that nothing knows of mercy,

But treats the being hurried into crime

By fierce, impetuous passion, and the wretch

Grown gray in wickedness, with like severity.

O save him then, my lord, and save yourself

From woe unutterable!

[*Enter attendant with officers.*]

LYNCH.

Tirlogh, rise.

[*He rises.*]

My duty is most plain, however painful,
And cannot be avoided. (*To the officers.*) To your
charge

Do I commit this youth. Stand not amazed.

He is your prisoner.

[*Enter DAME MARGARET, and hurries up to WALTER.*]

DAME MARGARET.

What's this I hear?

They tell me Gomez hath been basely murdered;—
But sure that could not be and thou be near?

CAHIR.

Perhaps he was too near.

DAME MARGARET.

What means the knave?

CAHIR.

No knave, good lady, but an honest man,
Who speaks even as he thinks.

TIRLOGH, (*to Cahir.*)

Wilt hold thy peace,
Before I cut thy tongue out, yelping cur?

CAHIR.

Why, at thy bidding, should I hold my peace,

Who am as good a father's son as thou.
 As good? Ay, better. 'Neath this ragged vest
 Is purer blood than ever warmed thy heart,
 For all thy gay apparel—thy daw's feathers—
 Another's lendings.

DAME MARGARET, (*not heeding him.*)

How is this, my son?

All eyes are turned on thee, and thine alone
 Are bent upon the earth. What does this mean?
 Art thou with grief so overcome as not
 To hear thy mother's question?

[*Turning to LYNCH.*

Tell me husband—

[*Officers place themselves on either side of WALTER, who is about to accompany them, when she rushes before them.*]

O, no! no! no! ye shall not take him from me!
 Will no one say with what this youth is charged?

CAHIR.

The murder of young Gomez.

DAME MARGARET.

What base tongue
 Would couple *murderer* with the name of LYNCH?

CAHIR.

Even the tongue of your own son, my lady.

DAME MARGARET.

I charge thee, Walter, by the love thou ow'st me,
 To say to me, they do accuse thee falsely.

WALTER.

Dear mother! blame not any for the strait
Wherein I'm placed—I am mine own accuser.

DAME MARGARET.

O he is mad! Do ye not see he's mad?
This sudden and most terrible affliction
His reason has unseated! Had it not,
Would he, the kindest, the most merciful
Of living beings, who would injure not
The meanest of God's creatures, charge himself—
O monstrous charge!—of lifting up his hand
Against the friend that most he loved on earth?
O Heaven! it is not to be credited!
Why (*to Lynch*) stand'st thou there, like image cut in
stone,
Cold, and immovable, when on thy house
Destruction comes in its most dreadful form?

LYNCH.

Even as Heaven wills. If I must bear the brand
Upon this furrowed brow, for wrongs I ne'er
Have even in thought committed—be it so!
The dust will cover soon my shame and me.
And when I'm dead, I shall not of my blood
Leave one behind to whom my memory
Can bring a blush. The cold, unlovely grave
Will be more welcome than the bed of down

To one despised and childless! Walter! Walter!

WALTER, (*throwing himself on his knees.*)

O pardon, pardon! that upon thy head,
Grown gray in honour, my rash deed hath brought
Unmerited disgrace.

LYNCH, (*raising him.*)

Kneel not to me.

The shadow, that must fall upon my name,
Will pass away—as all things earthly pass—
And even the name shall cease to be remembered
In honour or reproach. But kneel to Him,
Whom thou hast outraged by thine impious act,—
Thy rude defacement of His noble image,—
And humbly pray the waters of His mercy
To cleanse the blood-stains from thy guilty soul.
Now, officers, your duty. Take him hence.

DAME MARGARET, (*throwing herself upon the neck of*

WALTER.)

Yet, yet a moment. Whether true or false
The charge ye urge against him—I know not.
But this I know;—he is my child; and ne'er
In helpless infancy, when in these arms
His form was cradled, and upon this bosom
His head was pillowed, did he need the love
That o'er him watched as much as now he needs it:
And he shall have it. We will go together.

WALTER.

Nay, dearest mother! As alone I sinned,
 Even so must I alone by suffering
 Seek pardon for the crime I have committed.
 Release me, then, and go thou with my father.

DAME MARGARET.

And leave thee to the horrors of a prison?—
 Without one friendly voice to cheer the gloom?—
 One sympathizing heart to rest upon?—
 And thou cast off by all the world beside?
 Indeed, indeed I cannot!

WALTER.

Be advised,
 I pray, dear mother. Let me now obey
 The Law's demand unhindered. 'Twill be best.

DAME MARGARET.

Where all is evil there can be no best.

LYNCH, (*disengaging her from* WALTER.)

In all the years that we have passed together,
 I ne'er have had to claim a husband's right
 To thy obedience. Must I do so now?

DAME MARGARET, (*going with him.*)

No, dearest husband;—but my son, my son!

WALTER, (*as his father turns away.*)

But bless me, wilt thou not? before I go!

LYNCH, (*returning and embracing him.*)

O from this breaking heart, I say—God bless thee!

[*As they stand in the centre of the hall, with the officers behind them, DAME MARGARET, supported by TIRLOGH, on one side, and the bier, surrounded by sailors and citizens, on the other, the Act ends.*]

A C T I I I.

SCENE I.

Interior of the Church of St. Nicholas, the high altar of which is covered with black and lighted. Before the altar the coffin of GOMEZ, on which candles are burning. LYNCH, in his robes of office, is discovered kneeling at the foot of the coffin. He rises and comes forward.

LYNCH.

O could I put this bitter chalice by,
 How gladly would I change my proud estate
 For poverty, and toil, and banishment
 Eternal from the blessed light of day,
 And the sweet air, of which the meanest thing
 That God hath formed is free. There is no depth
 Of human degradation I would not
 With cheerfulness explore, could I but take
 With me the holy bond of love unbroken.
 O Heaven! what crime unknown have I committed,
 That for atonement thou of me demandest
 A sacrifice so terrible? My life—
 Would but my life suffice—most cheerfully
 It should be offered up in expiation.
 Then teach me, O some minister of good!
 How I may save my son yet keep my oath.
 My oath? What is that oath? A word!—a breath!
 And shall a thing so weak possess the power

To wring the life of life from out our hearts,
 And make these forms our beings' sepulchres?
 Alas! how weak a thing am I become!
 That I should strive, with sophistries like these,
 To cheat my conscience to my soul's undoing?
 Deliberate was my oath, inviolate
 The Law t' administer. That oath is writ
 Against me in the registry of Heaven,
 In characters as Heaven endurable,
 And, though my heart-strings shrivel in the fire
 Of the ordeal, must be kept. O Thou!
 Who mid his tortures nerv'st the martyr's heart,
 Now aid me with Thy strength to do my duty.

. [Exit.

Enter ARTHUR and TIRLOGH.

TIRLOGH.

A melancholy errand brings us here!

ARTHUR.

It is, indeed, a melancholy errand!
 Ah, Tirlogh, not in haste shall we forget
 Our first sad meeting in this holy place.
 O I am sick at heart, in grieving o'er
 The woe unparalleled now fallen upon us.
 A few short hours have done the work of years.
 My youth seems gone, and all the weariness
 Of age hath settled, like a blighting frost,
 Upon my spirit. We have come to pray

Beside the corse of Gomez, yet, so full
Of his unhappy murderer are my thoughts,
I cannot frame a prayer for the departed.

TIRLOGH.

I grieve indeed for both; yet not like those
Who hopeless grieve. I have no fears for Walter.

ARTHUR.

Thou know'st his father is inflexible.

TIRLOGH.

He is accounted so. But ne'er till now
Hath his inflexibility been tested.
I've heard of rocks of ice, that seemed as hard
As adamant, yet were not proof 'gainst fire.
O sir, we'll see how soon this heart thou deem'st
Inflexible will yield.

ARTHUR.

Pray Heaven it may.

[*Organ sounds.*]

But hush; that sound preludes the holy rites.
Then let us from our thoughts dismiss the living—
No easy task—and think but of the dead.

[*They retire up towards the altar, as monks and others enter in procession, and arrange themselves on either side of the coffin.*]

REQUIEM.—MONKS.

A weak and erring child of dust,
To whom his Master did entrust

A jewel of excelling worth,
Has passed to his account from earth.

A weary path has man to tread,
And round him are temptations spread,
And oft, alas! his strength will fail,
Or pleasure's blandishments prevail.

Then if he slept when he should wake,
And let the foe his treasure take,
Or if neglect its lustre dim,
Pity, dear Lord! and pardon him.

[*Scene closes.*]

SCENE II.

A chamber in the house of LYNCH. Enter AGNES dejectedly, and stops before a picture of the MATER DOLOROSA.

HYMN.—AGNES.

Sweet Mother! through whose tender breast,
The sword of grief hath passed,
O from thy place of blissful rest
An eye of pity cast!
Thou seest a maid whose heart is torn
By sharpest misery,
Then think of all which thine has borne,
And, Mother, pity me!

All hope of earthly aid is gone!
And I to none can turn,
If thou, O Queen of Heaven's bright throne,
Thy lowly suppliant spurn.

Then MOTHER!—by that tender name
 By Him was given to thee
 For love of man from Heaven who came,—
 O MOTHER! pity me!

Enter DAME MARGARET.

DAME MARGARET.

Dear child, I grieve to find thee so desponding.
 But take not counsel of thy fears—but hopes.
 What though the night be dark? the morn will come
 When all its darkness shall be turned to light.

AGNES.

Ah, madam, little cause have we for hope;
 And thou but yesternight did'st hopeless seem.
 What since hath happ'd to change thy tears to smiles?

DAME MARGARET.

An angel have I seen—in Tirlogh's form;—
 Tirlogh; the well-tried friend of our poor Walter;—
 Who bade me not despair. And thus he reasoned:
 His father is his judge;—then he is safe.
 For could a father's heart the thought conceive,
 Or father's tongue give utterance to the thought,
 That, howso'er deserved, his son should die
 A felon's death? He may condemn the crime—
 And who does not?—yet spare the criminal
 He can and will. Nay, must. Indeed he must.
 For if his own strong love should not compel him—
 But that it will who doubts?—to step between

The Law and him who has transgressed the Law,
 The universal sentiment of love,
 Which makes the child the parent's dearest care—
 The feeling common to the meanest hind
 As to the proudest noble—would raise up
 A wall of hearts to bar him from his purpose,
 If that were death to him he should protect;—
 The true, the earnest, the right-judging people
 Rise in their might, and from the altar tear
 The victim he to an unholy Law
 Would immolate. O no, he will not die!

AGNES.

O blessings on him! he has from my heart
 A burthen raised that weighed it to the earth.
 But is't not dreadful here to wait inactive
 Until some leaden-footed messenger
 Shall bring us tidings he is guiltless found?

DAME MARGARET.

And wherefore wait that tardy messenger,
 When we are free to go into the court,
 And catch the blessed words of pardon from
 The judge's lips, before the gaping crowd
 Shall turn them into meaning? I have dresses
 Will so disguise us, that our nearest friends
 Would know us not.

AGNES.

Dear madam, this is kind.

DAME MARGARET.

But, look well, Agnes, into thy heart's depths,
 And see if any weakness there be lurking
 Will render thee unable to perform
 The task we have before us. If there be,
 Leave not thy chamber. I can go alone.
 The love that fills the bosom of a mother
 Would, to the feeblest of our sex, give strength
 To bear worse evils, than to stand alone
 Amid a jostling crowd.

AGNES.

Fear not for me.

Let me but stand where I may gaze upon him ;
 May catch the murmured music of his voice,
 Or only breathe the blessed air he breathes,
 And I will nerve me to endure the worst
 That can befall. O how I long to be
 The first to cry from out the multitude,
 "Walter! art safe!—art free!"

DAME MARGARET.

But should his doom
 Be death?

AGNES, (*shuddering, and covering her face.*)

O Heaven! But no;—it cannot be!

DAME MARGARET.

Nay, be not frightened, girl;—it *shall* not be,

While lives of the bold race of which I come
 A man to guard the honour of our house.
 Die like a felon? Thinkest thou the Blakes
 Would from their Castle of the Hills look down,
 And see an act committed at their feet
 That must for ever brand them with disgrace,
 Nor yet stretch forth a hand to save their kinsman?
 O no. There is not one, from chief to kern,
 Who, should his father's reverence for his oath
 The voice of nature stifle in his breast,
 Would not make common cause with me, to save
 A life in which both mine and thine are bound.
 But let us haste, that we may meet the joy
 Would be too long in coming.

AGNES.

O most gladly.

[*Exeunt.*]



SCENE III.

A street. Enter MIHIL.

MIHIL.

Ah, well! of all the sights I've ever seen—
 And these old eyes have witnessed many sad ones—
 I ne'er saw one so piteous as this!
 A father sitting in the Judgment Seat,
 At which his only son stands charged with murder—

And if the charge be proved—as proved it must be—
That father's lips—the thought doth freeze my blood!—
Must pass upon his son the doom of death.
How my heart aches for them!

Enter CAHIR.

CAHIR.

Whence com'st thou, neighbour?

MIHIL.

From witnessing the trial.

CAHIR.

Well, how goes it?

Is it thy thought they'll prove this ruffler guilty
Of any thing will put his neck in danger?

MIHIL.

Alas, I fear they will.

CAHIR.

Why should'st thou *fear* it?

MIHIL.

Because I loved this youth,—as who did not?—
The kindest heart and freest hand in Galway,
Which even thou wilt not deny—and if
The crime be proved—the penalty must follow.

CAHIR.

Thou mean'st it would—were he thy son or mine.
But, being whose he is, 'twere very strange

If something be not found in the indictment,
 Or the proceedings of the court—unless
 They plead at once insanity—to warrant
 Postponement of the judgment for a term.
 And, in the interim, what is to hinder
 The youth—by the remissness of his gaolers,
 Who need not fear too rigid scrutiny
 Into their acts—beyond the sea t' escape?
 When, as thou know'st, the citizens stand ready,
 As soon as Tirlogh shall the signal give,
 To aid him in his flight.

MIHIL.

And so do I,
 And so would every man who hath a heart
 To feel for human misery. And what misery
 Like this which threatens the noble-hearted Lynch—
 To doom away the life of his own child?

CAHIR.

'Tis something of a trial, I admit.

MIHIL.

O hadst thou seen him as this morn I saw him,
 Kneeling within the chapel of St. Bhried,
 Thou must have wished to spare all further trial
 Of one so sorely tried. Before the altar
 He knelt—or, rather, crouched,—and on his breast
 His hands were folded tight, as if to still

The throbbings of his heart, while his thin locks,
 Grown sudden white, around his temples hung
 In wild disorder. Up his face was turned;—
 I ne'er saw living face so like the dead's,
 Save there was not the calm that marks the dead's;—
 And from his brow the sweat in heavy drops
 Fell down. He looked like one bereft of all
 That earth can give, and asking help from Heaven.

CAHIR.

I have no quarrel with this Lynch Fitzstephen;
 And, though I had no wish to see him such,
 Must say most ably hath he filled the office
 Of our chief magistrate; and 'tis not therefore
 From any personal feeling in the matter,
 That I declare, I have but little faith
 In his ability—mark, not his *will*,
 But his *ability*—to give a judgment,
 Whate'er the proofs against the criminal,
 Must make his old age childless.

MIHIL.

Ah, my friend,

Thou little know'st the man of whom we speak,
 To judge him thus. Let him but know his duty,
 And from it he'll not shrink, cost what it may.

CAHIR.

Bah! I at least know human nature, Mihil,

If him I know not, who I think is *Mon*.
 But go thy ways, while I will to the court,
 And see how well my prophecy's fulfilled.

[*Exit.*

MIHIL, (*looking after him.*)

Thy hope is that it may be falsified.
 And never did I pray for disappointment
 To wish of man as now I pray for thine.

[*Exit in an opposite direction.*

SCENE IV.

The court. LYNCH *in the Judgment Seat.* WALTER, *with* ARTHUR *on one side and* TIRLGGH *on the other, stands in the prisoner's place.* *Spectators fill the lower part of the hall, among whom are* DAME MARGARET *and* AGNES, *disguised.*

AGNES, (*aside, and looking at* WALTER.)

How wretched are his looks! His manly form
 Hath lost its noble bearing! On his brow
 Is writ the anguish of a wounded spirit!
 His cheek is pale, and sunken; and his eye—
 From which the soul of honour once looked forth
 So proudly—turns its gaze upon the earth,
 As if he feared to meet the face of man!
 O crime! this is thy work!

DAME MARGARET, (*aside.*)

My son! my husband!

I cannot look upon them, the hot tears
 So gall mine eyes and blind me. O, sweet Heaven,
 Have pity on them, and support them both.

LYNCH.

Prisoner, stand forth.

[WALTER advances to the centre.

Thou'st heard the testimony
 That doth convict thee of a grievous crime—
 A crime alike by God and man abhorred—
 And which the unhappy perpetrator places
 Beyond the pale of social fellowship,
 And dooms him to an ignominious death.

[Sinks back.

A SPECTATOR.

Look to the Mayor;—he faints!

LYNCH, (*rousing himself with an effort, and waving back
 those who press forward to assist him.*)

If thou hast any thing to offer in
 Extenuation of thy dire offence,
 Or why the sentence of the Law should not
 Against thee be pronounced, now be it said.

WALTER.

Nothing have I to offer. I already
 My crime have published; and to what I then
 Confessed I do adhere. And though from Heaven
 I may forgiveness hope of my dread sin,

Which, with compunction lasting as my life,
 And with unceasing tears, I shall bewail,
 I cannot from the laws that I have outraged
 Expect aught else but death: and, to the fate
 Which I have merited, I do submit
 Without a murmur. Let me know my doom.

LYNCH.

Then learn it from the lips that laid the first
 Fond kiss of welcome on thine infant brow,
 And uttered the first words of thanks to Heaven
 That to mine ancient house an heir was born.

[Pauses greatly affected.]

Hear, Walter Lynch, the sentence of the Court.
 'Tis this. Thou to the prison must return
 From which thou camest; whence, on this day month,
 Before the hour of prime, thou shalt be taken
 Unto the usual place of execution,
 And by the neck be hanged 'till thou art dead!
 And O may God have mercy on thy soul!

[Falls back senseless.]

TIRLOGH.

O Heaven! this is murder, and not justice.

WALTER, (*to Tirlogh.*)

If thou hast ever loved me, speak not now.

LYNCH, (*slowly recovering.*)

Remove the prisoner.

AGNES, (*rushing forward as the officers approach, and throwing her arms around WALTER.*)

Off! and touch him not!

Or, if ye will take him, why take me too.
One dungeon shall receive us, and one grave,
Whence we together will ascend to Heaven.

WALTER.

This is beyond the bitterness of death!
O Agnes, thy unchanging love and truth,
To him whose crime was first a doubt of thee,
Is the severest torture. I was not
For this prepared. (*To officers.*) In pity take me hence!

AGNES, (*clinging to him.*)

They shall not part us.

DAME MARGARET, (*interfering.*)

In an hour like this,
O wilful maiden! is it for a mother
To teach thee patience? Look, is this a place,
Beneath the vulgar and irreverent gaze,
To show a thing so sacred as the love
That should be shrined within a woman's breast?
All efforts here are impotent to stay
The course of those who serve the Law, and what
We cannot do that should we ne'er essay.
Come thou with me.

WALTER.

Dear Agnes, leave me now.

And, mother, let her henceforth be to thee
What I, alas! must be no more—thy child!

DAME MARGARET.

My child she is, and shares my heart with thee.
But only shares, for none can take thy place.
Farewell, my son. Droop not. The worst is passed.
The Judge hath spoke—the Father now must act.

[*Exit leading out* AGNES.]

WALTER.

What does she mean? Can there be chance of pardon?
An hour ago, I thought my heart was dead
To every hope that appertained to life;
But now, that I have seen my love once more,
I feel, though ever in my cup of joy
Must crime infuse its bitterness, I would
Still willingly drag on the chain of life,
While Agnes shrank not from me. (*To officers.*) I
attend you.

LYNCH, (*descending from his seat, with the assistance of*
ARTHUR *and* TIRLOGH.)

A moment stay.

WALTER, (*aside.*)

What trial now awaits me?

LYNCH, (*breaking from those who attend him, and falling on his knees before WALTER.*)

Walter, my son, forgive thy wretched father!

WALTER, (*attempting to raise him.*)

My father! O forgive thy guilty son!

[LYNCH rises to his feet. They embrace. WALTER is led out, and LYNCH, staggering back, is caught by ARTHUR.]

A C T I V.

SCENE I.

A room in the house of LYNCH. Enter LYNCH followed by TIRLOGH.

LYNCH.

No more, Tirlough, no more;—I will not hear thee.
Think'st thou I've shut my heart to others' prayers
To open it to thine? Be disabused.

TIRLOGH.

I plead no more. But now, Lord Mayor of Galway,
I do demand fulfilment of a promise.

LYNCH.

To that I'll listen. Give thy meaning words.

TIRLOGH.

Twelve years ago, when sporting in the bay
With your unhappy son, a sudden tempest
Upset our shallow skiff, and plunged us both
Amid the boiling waves, that foamed and roared
To drown our cries for aid, had there been hope
That any such could reach us from the land.
It was not the first time that with the waters
I had contended, and I rose above them.
But Walter was less fortunate, and sank,
As to my fear it seemed, to rise no more.

That fear gave strength to my exhausted frame.
I dived, and grasped him by his matted locks,
By which I dragged him upward to the day,
Despite the violence of warring billows,
And was, as then I thought, the blessed means
Of giving him unto a father's arms.

LYNCH.

O I remember, as 'twere yesterday,
My agony, when I beheld the peril
Of my poor boy, and the delirious joy
With which I clasped him to my heart, that swelled
With thankfulness—not more to Heaven than thee!

TIRLOGH.

You bade me then to ask whate'er I would,
And promised solemnly it should be granted.

LYNCH.

I do remember I so promised thee,
And ready stand to make my promise good;
But marvel that so long thou did'st delay
To ask for its fulfilment.

TIRLOGH.

Good my lord,
'Till now I nothing needed. By your bounty,
Had I been from a low condition raised,
To be companion to my foster-brother,
And was in all things treated as your son.

LYNCH.

And art thou not so still ?

TIRLOGH.

Alas, far better !

For he ——

LYNCH, (*sternly.*)

Forbear ! but name what thou would'st have.

TIRLOGH.

I stand alone. My father's aged limbs
 Rest in the grave. My mother's heart is dust,
 And cannot feel for aught shall me befall :
 And never yet hath pulse of maiden's breast
 Been quickened at the thought of me. The Law—
 That thirsty is for blood—demands a victim.
 Be mine the life that shall be offered to it ;—
 And give me, in fulfilment of your promise,
 The freedom of your son.

LYNCH.

This—this is cruel !

Thou seest me bound and helpless at the stake,
 O kill me then, but do not torture me !

TIRLOGH.

Think of your word.

LYNCH.

I think but of my OATH,

And every other thought is lost in that.
Go, go, and let me hear no more of this.

TIRLOGH, (*going.*)

You are obeyed, my lord. But when again
I come, it will not as a suppliant be,
But backed by arguments that shall require
More than a simple Yes or No to answer.

[*Exit.*]

LYNCH.

What! does he threaten? Well, it matters not.
His threats are harmless. Less I fear all foes
Without than one I carry in my bosom.

[*After a pause.*]

O it is terrible! I dare not look
Upon the desolation round me spread!
A winter, that no spring shall ever know,
Covers the earth: and o'er the heavens is cast
A thick, impenetrable pall. And this,
They tell me, is my work. That, for my pride,
A curse hath fallen on all goodly things,
And blasted them. And cold, reproachful looks,
And bitter words, are all that greet me now,
Turn where I will. O can they think this deed
Is one I would have chosen to perform,
That they upbraid me thus, when they must know
The stern necessity that forced my tongue
To utter what was death to mine own heart?

For he was all to me!—my thoughts' sole centre!—
The life-pulse of my being! Walter! Walter!

*[Covers his face with his hands, and walks distractedly up
and down.]*

Enter ARTHUR.

Welcome, dear Arthur. Thou of all my friends,
Alone dost wear to me a brow unchanged,
And speaketh in the tone of other days.
I know thou lov'st thy cousin; and I thank thee,
That, in thy love for him, thou'st not forgotten
The pity due his father. 'Tis most foul,
The wrong my friends have done me in this matter.
For could I with my life redeem my son's
Most cheerfully the ransom should be paid.

ARTHUR.

Who knows thee cannot doubt it. But, dear uncle,
Why wilt thou doom thyself, and all who love thee,
To misery unnamable for nought?

LYNCH.

For nought? I have an oath I dare not break.
Is't that thou callest nought?

ARTHUR.

I call an oath
That's rashly taken—not being understood—
Such as the Church most wisely doth condemn—
Nothing;—or something it were far less sin
To break than keep. If thou hadst sworn to rob,

Or murder, art thou bound to keep that oath?

LYNCH.

No oath unlawful can the conscience bind ;
And he who swears he will commit a crime,
Sins by his oath, but doubly if he keep it.

ARTHUR.

Canst thou, believing thus, still plead thy oath
To justify a murder ?

LYNCH.

MURDER, Arthur ?

My oath is to maintain the laws, and they
The punishment of death award to murder.

ARTHUR.

I know the laws that have come down to us,
From times remote and barbarous ancestors—
Unnatural, bloody, and unchristian laws—
Have given to man a power which God alone
Should exercise—the power of taking life.
But, whatsoe'er the sanction of the laws,
'Till he can breathe a soul into the clod,
Or raise again, when crumbled into dust,
The glorious temple of God's holy spirit,
Let him not impiously dare to wield
The power of the Almighty, lest the blood
Shed by his hand—unhidden by the earth—
Rise up to Heaven, and cry aloud for vengeance !

LYNCH.

Dear Arthur, when the office I now hold
Was tendered to me, I accepted it
With a full knowledge of the laws thou speak'st of.
And, with this knowledge, by a solemn oath
I bound myself t' administer the laws
Even as I found them. I have no excuse.
Yet have I tried all arguments—in vain—
To satisfy my conscience, that I might
Yield to the yearnings of a loving nature,
And, saving from the dark, insatiate grave
Young manhood, raise up to the sun again
That storm-crushed flower, sweet Agnes,
And from the spirit of a doting mother
Remove the grief that bows it to the dust.
But O it cannot be! My Oath! My Oath!
Where'er I turn my gaze—to earth or heaven—
I see it writ in characters of fire:—
The shrieking winds and moaning waves repeat it;—
And when the solemn Night casts o'er the earth
Her broad protecting wings, unearthly voices
Sleep from my pillow scare by shrilly crying,
“Thine Oath! Thine Oath!” O Arthur, pity me!
My soul recoils with horror from the deed
My conscience clamours for; and my weak brain
Grows dizzy, as I contemplate the abyss
That yawns before me! Heaven! I shall go mad!

Enter AGNES.

LYNCH, (*with an effort at composure.*)

Poor child! how does it fare with thee?

AGNES.

Alas!

How else than ill can it with any fare
Deprived, as I, of hope—the life of life?
O take not from me all!—Yet leave me hope.

LYNCH.

Alas, here is no Hope! she's fled to Heaven.

AGNES.

'Twas thou didst fright her hence; and at a word
Canst lure her from her refuge back to earth.
Bid Walter live, and she will quick return.
Come, Arthur, kneel with me, and pray this stern,
Unnatural parent but to spare himself.

ARTHUR.

O I would wear the pavement with my knees,
In praying for the life of him we love,
Did I not know the heart thou seek'st to move
Is harder than the stones we tread upon.

LYNCH.

Pity me, Heaven! all earth is turned against me!
O Arthur, this from thee!

AGNES.

Nay, he will yield.

Come, kneel. (*They kneel.*) O look upon us. We do ask
 Nothing, but that thou wilt be merciful
 Unto thyself. Think of the present grief;
 The blighted name;—the black and desolate future,
 Thy deed must work, and spare, O spare thy son!

LYNCH.

Thou liftest up thy voice against the wind.
 I cannot hear:—Mine oath has made me deaf.

AGNES.

A wicked oath is that which shuts the heart
 Against the voice of Nature! O for pity,
 Pluck not with ruthless hand the love away
 That with my life is twined!

LYNCH.

Girl! do not talk
 Of thy young love to me;—a summer flower
 That lives but in the sun, and shrinks and dies
 If the cold wind breathe on it. Have not I,
 Obedient to a stern, relentless duty,
 Torn up a love whose roots were in my heart!—
 Yea, knit with every fibre of my being!—
 And cast it from me, even though life went with it!
 And thinkest thy weak voice can change a purpose
 All other pleadings hath resisted? Rise!

Enter DAME MARGARET.

Nay, rise not yet, 'till I have joined my prayers

With yours, in pleadings to this obdurate man.

(*Kneels.*) My lord! My husband! Father of my son!

Wilt thou not list to her whose lightest word

'Till now, as thou hast said, was law to thee?

LYNCH.

O do not mock me with this show of reverence,

My own, true wife! and, pray thee, do not ask

Of thy poor husband what he must deny,

But rise unto thy proper place—my heart.

DAME MARGARET.

No, I will kneel until my knees shall grow

Unto the earth, if sooner thou dost yield not.

O by our early love;—our wedded bliss;—

The hopes and fears we shared for one dear object,

My husband, list to me!

LYNCH.

I dare not hear thee!

DAME MARGARET.

I pray thee, by a mother's pangs—

LYNCH.

O woman!

Why prat'st thou of a mother's pangs to me,

When, to the agonies that I have borne—

And bear—thy mother's pangs were thrills of joy!

Up, up, I say. I cannot, will not hear thee.

DAME MARGARET, (*rising, and followed by ARTHUR and AGNES.*)

I rise. But mark me, hard, remorseless man!
 Though I must cease to plead, I shall not cease
 To use a woman's efforts from thy grasp
 To rescue him thy pride would doom to perish.
 For I have friends, strong both in will and means,
 Who will not stand and see a mother wronged;
 And he, whose blood thou wantonly would'st shed,
 Shall live, and thy poor malice laugh to scorn.
 Come with me, children; we will go where mercy
 Shall not be sought in vain.

[*Exit with AGNES and ARTHUR.*

LYNCH.

Gone! gone! all gone!

And I am left alone to meet the hour
 That fond and clinging hearts shall tear asunder.
 O Infinite Justice! aid me with thy strength
 To bear the heavy cross thou lay'st upon me.
 The human love, on which I leant securely,
 Hath broken in my grasp and wounded me
 Most deeply. Hope of earthly aid is none;
 And my sad soul, tossed like a shattered bark
 Upon a starless ocean, must sink down
 Among the floods that threaten to o'erwhelm it,
 Unless upborne by thy sustaining hand.
 Save me, O save me! from the fearful sin

To which I am most sorely tempted now,
 By subtle fiends, that borrow for their purpose
 The voices of our holiest affections !

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A hall in the house of LYNCH. Enter BLAKE OF THE HILLS and DAME MARGARET, with AGNES and ARTHUR, from opposite doors.

DAME MARGARET.

Dear brother, welcome ! I was now about
 To seek thee in thy Castle of the Hills,
 To beg of thee—no, no, not *beg*—demand
 That thou wilt save the honour of our race.

BLAKE.

That will I with my life, if thou wilt show me
 In what it is imperilled. .

DAME MARGARET.

Know'st thou not

My son—thy nephew—he who bears the name
 Of our most noble father—now in prison
 Lies under sentence of a shameful death ?
 That there is scarce the space of twelve short hours
 Between him and the scaffold ? That the sun,
 Which shall to-morrow gladden all the earth,
 Will shine upon his blackened corse, unless

Thou stretchest forth thy hand to snatch him from
 The executioner ? Then save him, brother !
 Save our pure blood from foul contamination ;—
 And me, thy sister save from death—or madness !

BLAKE.

I knew thy husband, like some man of old,
 Of whom I once heard tell, from one who had
 Lost precious hours in poring over books—
 Which, thank the blessed saints ! I never have—
 Had on his son pronounced the doom of death ;
 But did not dream that he would be so mad
 As push the Law to its extremity :
 Nor yet can I believe 'tis his intent.

ARTHUR.

Ah, father, thou but little know'st the man,
 To doubt his purpose when he gives it words.
 That which he says—he'll do.

BLAKE.

Dost think so, boy ?
 We'll see ; we'll see. Of me thou something know'st ;
 And know'st, I think, I never yet have yielded
 My resolution to another man's.
 If Lynch Fitzstephen were resolved to hang
 All of his name, if in their veins my blood
 Flowed not with his, I'd say, " With all my heart !
 The world has done, and yet may do without them."

But he should first have asked, before he gave
 His purpose breath, to hang my nephew, whether
 I would thereto consent. He has not done so :
 And I have come to tell him to his teeth,
 That, in despite of Law ;—its myrmidons ;—
 And the whole tribe of smooth-tongued hypocrites,
 Who seek by holy means unholy ends,
 And clothe Corruption in the garb of Justice ;—
 My nephew shall not die.

DAME MARGARET.

There spake the son
 Of my brave father !

AGNES.

Heaven's blessing on thee !

BLAKE.

Nor did I come alone to tell him this.
 For I have left without the city those
 Who, at the raising of my hand, would burst
 His victim's prison doors ; lay with the dust
 His dungeon walls, and give him back to freedom ;
 Or from the very gallows—

AGNES, (*with a shudder.*)

O dread Heaven !

BLAKE.

In spite of all their guards, bear him away
 In triumph to his grandsire's rock-built home.

ARTHUR.

Give me thy kerns, and we will teach these curs
To open never more on noble game.

BLAKE.

No, by thy leave, that duty shall be mine.
Go to thy cousin. Bid him be of cheer.
No hair of his shall ever come to harm.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The prison. WALTER alone.

WALTER.

'Tis night without the prison walls. So judge I
From the unbreathing silence that now presses
So heavily on all around me, not
Because the light's withdrawn that cheered of late
This dismal place, for day ne'er enters here.
And Night has given peace to all the land.
The weary hind, and o'ertasked artizan,
Forgetful of their toil, and care, and want,
Have laid them down to dream of happiness.
The widow to her breast her infant folds,
And sleeps, and he that's gone is at her side,
When she doth smile, and think the truth a dream.
The sick man even hath forgot his moan :

And, save the guilty, all short respite find
 From woe. For him there's no forgetfulness.
 Sharp thorns are in his pillow; and his heart
 Hath at its core the worm that never dies.
 O for one hour of unremembering sleep!
 One night of darkness that would from my gaze
 Shut out that form which, turn me where I will,
 Is still before me! Must it be thus ever?
 Alas! alas! to what a narrow space
 My *ever* now is dwindled. A few hours,
 And the Great Mother, taking to her bosom
 Her suffering child, shall soothe him into quiet.
 Then shall I rest? Ah, no! Not in the grave
 Can there be rest for one blood-stained as I,
 Unless the bitter waters of repentance
 Have washed away his guilt!

Enter ARTHUR.

Welcome, dear cousin.
 Thou kindly com'st to gladden with thy presence
 The convict's cell, and bless his parting hour.
 But how is it thou com'st alone? My mother?
 And Agnes? Will not they too see me?

ARTHUR.

Yes.

But, Walter, not in this most wretched place.
 They wait thee where no walls shall from thee shut
 The pure, free air of Heaven.

WALTER.

What canst thou mean?

ARTHUR.

That thou shalt walk abroad in freedom yet.

WALTER.

O, Arthur, mock me not! Kindle not hope,
Only to render darker my despair.

ARTHUR.

I bid thee hope, because I know thy hope
Shall not be disappointed.

WALTER.

O my heart,
Bound not so wildly! Let not love of life
Lure thee to grasp at that thou canst not reach.
Alas! alas! nor guilt, nor penitence
Hath power to sunder the strong links that bind
The young and loving to the things of earth.
And I am young, and, Arthur, I have loved—
And still do love—with all my being's strength.
And 'tis so terrible, leaving behind
The treasures of the heart, to go alone
Into the cold, dark grave—and be forgotten!
Then cheat me not with hope at this late hour,
Or I shall die when undeceived!

Enter LYNCH and PRIEST.

My father!

Thou com'st to bring me life?

LYNCH.

Ay, life eternal;—

Hast thou had grace to ask for it from Heaven;—

Alas, I cannot promise other life.

And, O my son! let not the love of that

Which, even while we look on't, passeth from us,

Loosen thy hold on life that shall endure

When this vain world, to which the heart so clingeth,

Shall be the Nothing whence 'twas called at first;

Nor leave my wretched age the harrowing thought,

When I have yielded thee unto the laws,

That they have slain thy soul as well as body.

WALTER, (*covering his face, and falling on his knees.*)

O, Arthur, it was cruel to deceive me!

ARTHUR, (*aside to WALTER.*)

Deceive thee did I not:—There still is hope.

WALTER, (*rising, and embracing him.*)

None, none for me! farewell!

[*Exit ARTHUR.*]

[*After a pause, to the PRIEST.*]

Thou, holy father,

For the few hours that I may still call mine,

Wilt stay with me, and aid me with thy counsels,

To meet my doom as may become a Christian.

LYNCH.

I too will stay with thee this last sad night !
And, as I've watched by thee in happy childhood,
Will watch once more ;—but with how changed a spirit !

PRIEST.

Let us with prayer our solemn watch begin.

[They kneel.

A C T V.

SCENE I.

A retired part of the city. TIRLOGH, CAHIR, MIHIL, and CITIZENS.

TIRLOGH.

Ye know, my friends, for what we are assembled.
Within a stone's throw of the spot whereon
We stand, a murder;—though the deed may have
Another name, it is no less a murder,
For all the sanction of the law, than if
In heat of passion I my fellow-man
Should slay;—a murder on the coming morn
Shall be committed, if ye step not forth
To stay the acting of so foul a crime.
I need not speak to you of Walter Lynch;
For no one here knows not the poor man's friend—
Long tried and never failing. Who among you
E'er knew distress that he refused to share?
Or asked for aid which was denied by him?
And not alone your friend in time of trial;
But heartsome sharer of your merry games,
And loved by all for the unfailing sunshine
His presenee east on your festivities.
O ye would miss him should mischance befall him.
Well, he—the generous friend—the gay companion—

Must die—more like a dog than Christian man—
Unless ye kindly aid me to prevent it.

CAHIR.

I do not wish his death;—no, Heaven forbid!
Yet every man should suffer for his crimes.

TIRLOGH.

Thou mean'st not that. Thou, Cahir, hast a son,—
A youth our very noblest might be proud of,
So have I often heard poor Walter say—

CAHIR.

'Twas like him. He had still a kindly word
For all; and my poor Phadrig loved him much.

TIRLOGH.

Now had thy son—by some unguarded act—
And who is always master of himself?—
Done that would place his life in jeopardy,
When thou should'st see him at the gallows' foot,
Would'st stand—because he had for once done wrong—
And see him mount to shame and sure destruction,
Without one effort to avert his doom?

CAHIR.

One effort? I would drag him from the scaffold,
Or I would die in the attempt to do it.

TIRLOGH.

I know thou would'st. The father who would not
Deserveth not the name. Yet, by his office,

Is Lynch denied the blessed privilege
 Enjoyed by every father in the land,
 To turn aside the shaft aimed at the heart
 Of him he loves ; but must—writhe as he may—
 Yield up his son a victim to the Law.
 O men ! O fathers ! will ye that a *father*
 Should be compelled, by stern, relentless duty,
 To do such outrage to a father's heart—
 To be the murderer of his only child !—
 When ye, by simply stretching forth your hands,
 Can save him from such wretchedness ?

MIHIL.

But tell us

What thou would'st have us do, and we will do it.

TIRLOGH.

Why, only this. Let each man here attend
 Among the crowd, that will before the prison
 Be gathered, to behold the agonies
 Of a poor fellow-mortal, which—disgrace
 To human nature !—even tender woman
 Finds pastime in ! and when I shall pronounce
 Our city's name, rush ye upon the guards,
 And overpower them. This you may do easily.
 For they are men ; and in their painful duty
 Be sure men's hearts are not. Then seize the prisoner.
 And when we have him with us once again,
 We'll take good care to place him beyond danger.

MIHIL.

But should the guards be reinforced ?

TIRLOGH.

No fear.

That would require the order of the Mayor ;
 And rather would he ye succeed than fail.
 But, at the worst, the followers of his uncle—
 Blake of the Hills—are now without the city,
 Ready to battle for young Walter's life,
 Who will come joyfully to your assistance,
 And aid the cause of Right 'gainst any odds.

MIHIL.

Say nothing more. We all of us are ready
 To do thy bidding. Are we not ?

ALL.

We are.

TIRLOGH.

I cannot speak my thanks ; but in my heart
 The memory of your truth shall never die.
 But let us now disperse, and each return
 Unto his home, and wait the hour that's near
 And so, good-night to all.

ALL, (*as they disperse.*)

Good-night, good-night.

[*Exeunt followed by TIRLOGH.*]

SCENE II.

An apartment in the house of LYNCH. Enter BLAKE, DAME MARGARET, and ARTHUR.

BLAKE.

All is prepared. My kerns but wait the word,
To march into the city, and the prison
Must pass into our hands in half an hour;
And Walter then is free. To this my word
" Is pledged; and that has ne'er been falsified.

DAME MARGARET.

And may not I go with you?

BLAKE.

"Twere scarce safe.

But when we shall have gained admittance, then
Shall Arthur here, with thee and Agnes, come
To join us.

ARTHUR.

But can I be of no service?
In his great peril, shall my cousin owe
Nothing to me for his deliverance?

BLAKE.

Thy aid we need not. Stay, then, where thou art,
And seek, with the glib tongue with which thou'rt gifted,
To make the halting hours move swiftly by.

Enter AGNES.

DAME MARGARET.

Come, rouse thee, child;—the hour is near at hand
Which gives our darling Walter back to us.
And dost thou in the sunshine bow the head,
That through the storm so bravely was uplifted?

AGNES.

Alas, my mother!—let me call thee so,
For, since my father hath to his reward
Been called, I have than thee no other parent!—
The hour, whose near approach thou hail'st with joy,
Fills my distrustful heart with sad forebodings.
I fain would listen to the voice of Hope,
But her low whisperings by the cries are drowned
Of desolate Despair!

DAME MARGARET.

My brother here
Will tell thee, there is not a doubt to cast
A shadow on the path that leads to safety.

BLAKE.

Believe me, girl, ere tolling of the hour
Which was to be the call to pious christians
To pray for one departed, Walter Lynch
Shall stand as free as any man in Galway.

AGNES.

O that I too could think so!

DAME MARGARET.

Unbeliever,

Will nought convince thee ?

Enter TIRLOGH.

Welcome, welcome, Tirlogh.

Thy looks, without thy tongue, have told how well
The citizens have answered to thy call.

TIRLOGH.

As they have ever answered, when appeal
Is made, in simple phrase, to honest hearts.
They will not stand with folded arms and see
A deed committed would the world appal ;
But, siding with the weak against the strong,
Against high-handed Wrong with simple Right,
Are ready from the iron grasp of Law
To wrest its victim, when they hear the signal,
And give dear Walter back to life and freedom.

DAME MARGARET.

Heaven bless their honest hearts and willing hands !
True Justice never suffers in their keeping.
But, Agnes, come. We'll to my oratory.
Even joy may need with prayer be sanctified.

BLAKE.

Pray an you will. Come, Tirlogh, thou with me.

*[Exeunt DAME MARGARET, AGNES, and ARTHUR, at one door,
and BLAKE and TIRLOGH at another.]*

SCENE III.

The Prison. LYNCH, PRIEST, and WALTER.

WALTER.

I thank thee, holy father, for the strength
 Thy prayers and blessings have to me imparted.
 Now, that the grave is yawning at my feet,
 Its cold and dreary passage I no more
 Do fear, as when I viewed it from afar ;
 For thou assurest me, that true repentance
 Can never fail of gaining Heaven's approval,
 And through it may the sinner hope for pardon.
 And O, I beg of thee, when I am gone,
 In daily ministering at God's holy altar,
 Do not forget to join my name with his,
 Whom my rash act hath all untimely sent
 Into the presence of his Judge and mine,
 That both the victim and his murderer
 May 'scape the punishment their sins deserve.

PRIEST.

Fear not, my son ;—I never will forget thee.
 And if the earnest prayers of one poor sinner
 May for another be by Heaven regarded,
 Thou shalt find mercy and not chastisement.

WALTER, (*to* LYNCH.)

And now, my father, ere I quit for ever
 A world whose blessings I have so abused,

Upon my knees (*kneeling*) I pray thee pardon me
 The shame that's fallen on thine honoured head,
 And the keen anguish that thy heart hath pierced,
 Through my sad crime, and bless me ere I die.

LYNCH, (*raising and embracing him.*)

My son! my son! as I do pardon thee,
 May I be pardoned! and may Infinite Mercy
 Bless thee, my boy, as doth thy father bless thee!

[*To the OFFICER who enters.*]

Well, sirrah, what would'st thou?

OFFICER.

The hour, my lord,
 Named for the execution is arrived.

LYNCH.

Arrived? 'Tis false! Where are the signs of day?
 Dost hear the trampling of the feet of those
 Who are abroad before the stars grow dim,
 To win by daily toil their daily bread?
 No, all is silent, save the hollow sounds
 These vaulted dungeons give in answering me.
 And then, where is the sun? Seest aught of him?
 Yet would not his bold eye have looked into
 These heavy mists, that render dim our torches,
 And scattered them, if it were as thou sayest?

OFFICER.

You do forget, my lord; no sound of that
 Which passes in the street can reach us here;

And, save the blaze that shall consume the world,
No light can find its way into these dungeons.

LYNCH.

I did forget :—God help me !—I forget
All, all, save that I am the most accursed
And wretched thing on whom the load of life
Was ever laid ! 'neath which both heart and brain
Are crushed ! No wonder I forget all else !

PRIEST.

Great are thy trials :—let thy patience be
As great, and thine shall be the martyr's crown.

LYNCH, (*impatiently.*)

The martyr's crown ! O father, was there one,
Of all the glorious host baptized in blood,
Who bore a martyrdom like this of mine ?
What is the anguish of the dying body—
That is no more remembered when it ceases—
Compared to this which wrings th' immortal spirit ?
O give me strength, sweet Heaven ! that I yield not
To the despair that tuggeth at my heart !

WALTER.

Dear father, be more calm. Make not thy son
A coward seem when he should play the man.
It easier were to meet my fate at once,
Than see the wretchedness my guilt has caused.

LYNCH.

Poor boy! thou justly dost admonish me.
 Yes, I'll be calm. Despair should ever be so!

[*Shouts without.*]

Enter GAOLER.

GAOLER.

My lord, my lord, the prison is beset
 By crowds of citizens, with bludgeons armed,
 And at their head young master's foster-brother,
 Tirlogh the Red; and with them that fierce chief,
 Blake of the Hills—the brother of your lady—
 Whose wild retainers, like a mountain flood,
 Have come upon us, threat'ning quick destruction
 To every thing that shall oppose their course;
 And all are loud demanding that we yield
 The pris'ner to them, ere they cast to earth
 This pile, of which they swear they will not leave
 One stone upon another. Hark! they come.

[*Shouts continued, with the noise of battering at the gate*]

Enter SECOND OFFICER.

SECOND OFFICER.

The gates are in possession of the mob;
 The avenues are closed against the guards;
 And on his way the executioner
 The citizens have seized, and all declare
 That he shall hang before the prisoner.

GAOLER.

O my good lord, I would advise you yield

To their demands, and set the prisoner free.

LYNCH.

What, have I heard a mother plead in vain;—
 Denied the prayers of an affianced bride,
 And silenced the deep cry of mine own heart,
 To stain at last my soul with damning guilt
 By rude enforcement of a brutish mob?
 O Walter, could I save thee without crime,
 With my own life I'd gladly ransom thine,
 But as I cannot, wilt thou that these men
 Now drive me into toils whence no escape
 Is left?

WALTER.

No, father. I'm content to die.
 Then let me satisfy the claims of Justice,
 That peace may be restored to all I love.

LYNCH.

Peace? Peace? O never to this heart shall Peace
 Return!—but desolate—for ever desolate!
 Till changed to dust, shall be her former dwelling,
 When she and thou have gone from me to Heaven!

[*The shouts sound nearer.*]

WALTER.

Come, let us not delay. They press upon us,
 And will be here anon. Quick, let us go.

LYNCH, (*wildly.*)

Go where, my boy? Eternal Heaven! to death?

WALTER.

It must be so.

LYNCH.

It must; dread Heaven! it must!

[Walks with WALTER towards the door.]

GAOLER.

The passage hence is blocked up by the people.

WALTER.

Is there no other?

GAOLER.

Yes. Pass through this vault;

[Opening a door at the back of the cell.]

And at the end you'll find a stairway leading

Thence to the platform. Follow, and I'll show it.

LYNCH.

One last embrace!

[Falls upon the neck of WALTER. Releases him; and after a struggle with himself, to the FIRST OFFICER.]

Do that which must be.

FIRST OFFICER.

Not for a kingdom's ransom would I do

The office here of executioner.

LYNCH, *(to SECOND OFFICER.)*

Friend, wilt not thou?

SECOND OFFICER.

My lord, I'd sooner drain

My heart's blood, drop by drop, than raise a hand

Against a life so sacred.

[*Battering and shouts renewed.*]

TIRLOGH, (*without.*)

Forward, men!

Strike with a will! The gates already yield;—
And must give way!

BLAKE, (*without.*)

That's bravely done, my kerns!

Forward again! We soon shall be rewarded,
By wresting from a murderous father's grasp
His noble son!

[*SOLDIERS shout exultingly.*]

LYNCH, (*distractedly.*)

To what will these men drive me!

Is't not enough that I was made to judge
A life away in which mine own was bound;
But will they force me to put forth my hand
To do the hangman's duty? Spare, O God!

[*Shouts, followed by a crash.*]

WALTER, (*eagerly to LYNCH.*)

One way is left thee to redeem thine oath.

(*To the GAOLER.*) Show us the secret passage.

FIRST OFFICER, (*rushing before them.*)

No, O no!

LYNCH, (*seizing him furiously, and casting him aside.*)

Away! or I will tear thee limb from limb!

[*Exeunt LYNCH, WALTER, and GAOLER, by the secret passage.*]

FIRST OFFICER.

O Heaven! this is too dreadful! Holy father,
Wilt thou stand by and see this murder done?

PRIEST.

What can I do? All that I could I've done.
But arguments and prayers have been in vain.

FIRST OFFICER.

I'll make, at least, one effort to prevent it.

[*Rushes out.*]

Shouts and a tremendous crash, and then enter BLAKE, TIRLOGH
SOLDIERS, and CITIZENS.

TIRLOGH.

Safe, safe at last!

BLAKE.

My nephew, thou art free!

Enter ARTHUR, DAME MARGARET, and AGNES.

DAME MARGARET.

My son!—where is my son?

AGNES.

Where, where is Walter?

SECOND OFFICER, (*after a pause, and pointing to the
secret passage.*)

Gone to death!

TIRLOGH.

Thou art deceived.

[*Rushes out.*]

AGNES.

Sweet mother!

[Falls, and is supported by ARTHUR]

ARTHUR.

Nay, cheer thee, gentle one,—this cannot be.

DAME MARGARET.

Who does not know it cannot? Man, thou ravest!

PRIEST.

Alas, my daughter! he too truly speaks.

TIRLOGH, *(returning.)*

Too late! too late! The fatal deed was done

Ere I arrived! So horrible a sight

Has eye ne'er witnessed! By the father's hand

Is slain his only son!

ARTHUR.

O CHRISTIAN LAW!

This murder is thy work!

[To AGNES, who has fainted.]

Poor, blighted flower,

Thou ne'er shalt raise thy head up to the sun!

[Lays her on WALTER'S couch, and kneels by her side.]

DAME MARGARET.

Dead? dead? My Walter? O ye seek to fright me.

Fly, brother, fly! *(to BLAKE)* or these will drive me mad.

[Exit BLAKE.]

He is not dead—the young!—the beautiful!

The gentle!—the beloved!—could *he* die,
 And leave his mother here all desolate?
 Good Tirlogh;—thou didst love him;—was not he
 Thy foster-brother?—say he is not dead.

TIRLOGH.

Dear lady, that I could!

DAME MARGARET.

I know thou canst.

Then say he is not dead—dear Tirlogh!—say it,
 And here I will kneel down, and worship thee.

[*To BLAKE, who returns*

O he is safe!

BLAKE.

Yes, safe—in Heaven, my sister.

DAME MARGARET.

O ye do all conspire to torture me.
 But I will go—

[*She is going, when LYNCH, followed by the GAOLER and
 FIRST OFFICER, enters, bearing the dead body of WALTER.*]

O Heaven! my sight is blasted!

[*Throws herself into the arms of BLAKE.*

LYNCH, (*staggering forward.*)

Ye have it as ye would, ye murderous crew!
 This is your work, and ye may glory in it.

[*To the SECOND OFFICER, who goes up to him*

Approach us not. He now is mine—all mine.
 The Law is satisfied—it has his life—

And this poor outraged form it leaves to me.

[Kneels on one knee, and rests the body on the other

Walter, my son! Walter! Wilt thou not speak
To thy poor father? Hast thou not one word
For him to whom the lisplings of thy childhood;—
Thy boyhood's ringing laugh;—thy manhood's tone,
Were music that did fill his foolish heart
With joy 'till it ran o'er? My brave, brave boy!
The ruffler now may smite the white-haired man,
And not a hand shall smite him in return,
While craven caitiffs boast o'er thy young valour!
O true and loving heart! when to this bosom
Wast ever pressed and gav'st no answering throb?
O God! O God! the meanest thing that crawls
Hath something of its own that it can love,
While thou must lie in a dishonoured grave—
Dug by the hand of him who loved thee best—
Leaving thy Judge—thy Executioner—
Thy FATHER! all alone in this bleak world,
To live in agony!—and still to live!

[Falls insensible upon the body

THE END.

